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I hereby declare that this PhD dissertation is my original work
and it has been written by me in its entirety.
I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information
which have been used in this dissertation.

This PhD dissertation has also not been submitted for any degree
in any university previously.

Lim Jia Hui
6th May 2021

Abstract

Even with comparable education and level of competence, workers with lower socioeconomic status (SES) origins are disadvantaged in terms of earnings and occupational attainment. This class gap, or the "class ceiling," is as large as the gender gap, but poorly understood. In my dissertation, I designed a series of related projects to explain and potentially mitigate the class ceiling problem. Across three projects, I mainly focused on where the problem starts—labor market and newcomer adjustment in organizations. I find that, beyond discrimination and bias that has been the focus of past work, many challenges stem from workers' own psychology and behaviors, which can be effectively addressed with a psychological intervention.

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Introduction

My dissertation aims to provide an integrative understanding of inclusion-related challenges faced by upwardly mobile workers, such as first-generation college graduates, or otherwise those coming from families of lower socioeconomic status (SES)[1]. Education is considered the main upward mobility pathway, but even with comparable education and level of competence, workers with lower SES backgrounds end up disadvantaged in terms of earnings and occupational attainment. This problem has been labeled the "class ceiling," highlighting the parallel with the "glass ceiling" faced by women. Unfortunately, the class ceiling has attracted drastically less attention and reasons for it remain poorly understood, making it potentially one of the main gaps in our knowledge on workplace inclusion.

Research on reasons for the class ceiling has focused predominantly on discrimination and bias that workers from lower SES backgrounds face before and upon joining organizations (Koppman, 2016; Laurison & Friedman, 2016; Pfeffer, 1977; Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). For example, Rivera (2012) studied selection in the context of elite professional services organizations, such as law firms, investment banks, and management consulting firms, and found that recruiters seemed aware that workers with lower SES backgrounds were as competent as other candidates but had negative impressions of their ability to fit in socially. As a result, they were less likely to hire them. Thus, most research focusing on class issues in the domain of work has emphasized demand-side processes, such as discrimination and otherwise constrained opportunities for those with lower SES backgrounds. However, this body of work has remained largely disconnected from research in psychology highlighting various supply-side psychological differences as a function of

[1] The focal constructs, "socioeconomic status", "social class" and "a richer versus poorer background", concern relative differences in material resources, or means of obtaining valued goods and services through economic transactions (e.g., money and other assets; Jones, 1976). This is in line with macro-level literatures on inequality and socioeconomic mobility (Milanovic, 2016), as well as micro-level literature on objective socioeconomic attainment (Judge et al., 1995; Ng et al., 2005; Wilensky, 1961).

SES background (Stephens et al., 2014), which have important implications for workplace outcomes. This is where I aim to contribute with a series of projects forming my dissertation. In the dissertation, I examine the class ceiling problem from three different angles. I choose to focus on the initial key transition stages (i.e., first internship, first job) in one's career, arguably where the problem starts, and examine how the behavior of employees with lower SES backgrounds could be improved to reduce class disadvantage in the workplace.

Overall, my dissertation helps provide an integrative understanding of the class ceiling problem in terms of how it is reproduced before and after entry into organizations and how internal and external stakeholders can endeavor to resolve class-related issues using scientifically informed and scalable interventions.

Chapter 1: Class Reproduction in the Labor Market: Why Individuals with Lower Socioeconomic Origins Avoid Creative Jobs

Workers with lower socioeconomic origins tend to be disadvantaged in the domain of work even after obtaining comparable education and qualifications (Laurison & Friedman, 2016). For example, early organizational research by Pfeffer (1977a) found that, ten years after graduating from a prestigious MBA program, students coming from lower SES families ended up with substantially lower salaries, despite equal qualifications (for similar results, see Dreher et al., 1985; Laurison & Friedman 2016; Pfeffer, 1977b). A growing body of research has started to investigate reasons for the class achievement gap in hope of generating recommendations for promoting class inclusiveness in the domain of work. Given the critical importance of labor market in shaping career and pay progression (Boudreau, Boswell, & Judge, 2001; Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2008), most research thus far examined whether workers with lower SES origins are discriminated against in the labor market, finding some albeit relatively weak evidence that such discrimination occurs (Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016).

Recent research extended studies on potential class-based labor market discrimination by examining whether the class achievement gap may be in part also explained by workers' own behavior. Most notably, Fang and Saks (2020) focused on workers with same educational qualifications and examined whether those with lower versus higher socioeconomic origins differ in how they search for jobs. Specifically, they found that SES origins strengthened the relationship between job search intensity and job search success and that this interaction was mediated by a less haphazard job search strategy. This perspective is important because it points to an additional and separate set of solutions (e.g., providing better job search training to less advantaged students) that cannot be solved by reducing bias among decision makers alone. I extend this research by proposing that, in addition to

differing in how they search for jobs, workers with lower versus higher socioeconomic origins also differ in which jobs they search for.

Creative jobs often require one to be independent and nonconforming (Holland, 1962). According to the Occupational Information Network (ONET), creative jobs necessitate self-expression and typically entail work tasks that can be completed without following a clear set of rules. These jobs therefore often attract individuals who possess individual traits such as being expressive, highly independent, and nonconforming (Barron & Harrington, 1981; Holland, 1962). Despite having several advantages for creativity and hence creative jobs, including being able to be creative under resource constraints, bringing unique insights and contributions, and being particularly effective at team processes like information sharing and integration (Dittmann et al., 2020; Martin & Côté, 2019; Mehta & Zhu, 2016), research from other domains suggests that individuals with lower SES origins have a lower interest in and disinclination toward creativity and creative jobs.

I draw on sociological and psychological research on class and values (Kohn, 1969; Lareau, 2011; Stephens et al., 2014; Weininger & Lareau, 2009) to propose that workers with lower SES origins display systematically lower interest in creative jobs, which shapes their career trajectories and thus helps explain achievement gaps later in life. Sociological work finds differences in values that parents from poorer versus richer families socialize their children into, such that parents from poorer family backgrounds are more likely to emphasize accepting and conforming with the status quo, and less likely to emphasize self-direction, initiative, and independent judgment (Kohn, 1969; Kohn & Schooler, 1969; Lareau, 2002; Weininger & Lareau, 2009). Recent work in social psychology replicated and expanded these findings by demonstrating that these socialization differences become and remain evident later in life (Phillips et al., 2020; Stephens et al., 2014). Finally, psychological research on impact of parental socioeconomic status on personality suggests that coming from a poorer

background will lead to lower openness to experience and higher neuroticism (Ayoub et al., 2018). To test these ideas, I conducted five studies, including an archival study using the Integrated Value Survey, a field study, and three policy capturing studies with early career job seeker samples.

The focus on jobs requiring creativity is informed not just by the clear connection between key features of such jobs such and psychological imprint of class background, but also the fact that such jobs are offer promise of long-term success in the modern knowledge economy, increasingly depended on innovation and characterized by the automation of routine work (Audia & Goncalo, 2007; Wachter & Estlund, 2012). This makes a potential self-selection out of creative jobs based among those from lower SES families likely increasingly relevant for the current and future class achievement gap. The proposed effect may also represent a notable opportunity loss for organizations, given what we know about low about SES origins and creativity.

This work also contributes to broader research on the role of self-selection in labor market engagement. Most work focused on explaining underrepresentation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) professions, and has highlighted the role of self-selection among women due to stereotypes of women's fit for this domain (Ceci & Williams, 2011; Ceci, Williams, & Barnett, 2009). I broaden the focus of this research to help explain another less well understood achievement gap concerning workers with lower SES origins and highlight the unique mechanisms and unique outcomes through which self-selection in labor market might operate for different disadvantaged groups. Specifically, unlike women, workers with lower SES origins face fewer challenges in STEM professions, and in fact, technical professions have been identified as domains with good upward mobility (Laurison & Friedman, 2016). I thus hope that my work motivates greater attention on

workers with lower SES origins, as well as on creative jobs, in the literature on labor market self-selection.

Theory and Hypotheses

An important framework to understand the creation and flow of human capital in the labor market is Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model. According to the ASA model, the processes of attracting, selecting, and retaining individuals drive the creation and management of human capital within organizations. By situating my research at the attraction stage, I seek to examine how the underrepresentation of individuals with lower SES origins in the creative jobs came to be right from the beginning of the sorting process, and in so doing, widen the scope of existing research examining the same underrepresentation problem.

Early sociological work has extensively documented the differences in values that children of different family backgrounds are socialized into (Kohn, Naoi, Schoenbach, Schooler, & Slomczynski, 1990; Kohn & Schooler, 1969; Kohn, Slomczynski, & Schoenbach, 1986). Parents from lower income families are more likely to emphasize values and characteristics about accepting and conforming with the status quo and external authority, whereas parents from higher income families are more likely to emphasize values and characteristics associated with self-direction, initiative, and independent judgment. The emphasis on accepting and conformity to status quo since childhood thus creates a strong disinclination for jobs that entail self-expression and self-direction, and tasks or projects that require independent thinking and no clear set of rules. Even if this disinclination is overlooked, the feeling of discomfort due to dissonance on the job itself can further lead these individuals to underperform, which then undermines their opportunity to succeed in creative jobs (Kahn, 1990).

Recent work in social psychology echoes the previous body of sociology work mentioned and demonstrates that socialization differences become evident later in life, most notably during the pursuit of higher education (Stephens et al., 2014). Since young, lower income families prepare their children for a world that is relatively materially constrained, and thus risky and unpredictable (Stephens et al., 2014). To adapt to these conditions, it is important for children to develop hard interdependence where they are self-reliant and depend on their strong suits rather than selecting paths that create more interpersonal costs, uncertainty, and adversity. Hard interdependence norms also increase one's awareness of social hierarchy and of one's place in society and remind one to be similar and interdependent with others around (Stephens et al., 2014). However, to navigate creative jobs effectively, workers are required to be able to express and direct themselves, experiment with different strategies at work, and be independent in their thinking.

The potentially distressing experience of entering a creative job may be similar to the experience of entering college in that lower SES individuals are more likely to feel like they are having an "out of field experience" (Harackiewicz et al., 2014; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Reay et al., 2009). The United States higher education prioritizes independence as the cultural ideal. Empirical evidence indicates that college students from lower SES origins who endorse an interdependent orientation are less likely to fit in and thus underperform academically, and these disparities in initial academic achievement persist even until graduation (Phillips et al., 2020). Since creative jobs are incongruent with the interdependent, risk-averse selves and other related norms that individuals from lower SES origins have embraced since young, these jobs signal to these individuals that they do not belong and may not attain success in this domain. Thus, I posit that individuals with lower SES origins will have a lower interest in and be less attracted to creative jobs than those with higher SES origins.

Hypothesis 1: Individuals with lower SES origins will be less attracted to creative jobs than individuals with higher SES origins.

I also investigated the mechanisms underlying the self-selection problem in creative jobs. The examination of mechanisms maps onto the broad dichotomy of task- versus social-related requirements in creative jobs to provide a balanced picture of the self-selection process (Amabile, 1993). When considering jobs to apply to, people are often concerned about whether they can complete the required job functions successfully and whether they would fit in well with others in the workplace. Focusing on the supply-side perspective, I contend that individuals with lower SES origins are less attracted to creative jobs because their upbringing and socialization patterns that focus on conformity values, interdependence orientation, and other personality traits (lower openness to experience, higher neuroticism, and lower self-esteem) are likely to make them believe that they have lower competence for the required job functions in creative jobs (regardless of the level of human capital they have) and lower fit with creative others in the workplace.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between SES origins and attraction to creative jobs is mediated by self-concerns about competence and fit.

Overview of Research

Given the focus on workers who are upwardly mobile (those who have secured educational opportunities and high level of human capital) and potential sources of the class ceiling problem in the labor market context, the ideal sample within which to test my theory is one of early career job seekers who have comparable educational qualifications and technical competence, and who are transitioning from higher education to their first jobs or from their first jobs to their second jobs. In Study 1, I used the Integrated Value Survey (IVS) dataset to explore the idea that individuals with lower SES origins are less likely to view creativity as important to their selves, compared to their higher SES origins counterparts. In

Studies 2 and 3, I used both student and working adult samples with field and experimental methodologies to test the related hypothesis that individuals with lower SES origins are less attracted to jobs that require higher levels of creativity, compared to those with higher SES origins. In Study 4, I replicated the main results from earlier studies and investigated the mechanisms underlying the self-selection problem in creative jobs.

Study 1

Method

Data Source

I tested my theory using the Integrated Value Survey (IVS) dataset. It consists of pooled cross-sectional datasets with representative samples of individuals (aged 18 and older) across several countries. Participants were interviewed by professionals using equivalent questionnaires for each country via either the phone or face-to-face interviews. As I used different indicators for the independent variable, the sample size ranged from 610 to 1,005 participants. I only included participants who are below age 25 and who have never held a job before.[2]

Measures

Importance of Creativity to Self. The IVS dataset included a measure of importance of creativity to the self. Participants indicated how similar he/she is to the person in the description, "It is important to this person to think up new ideas and be creative; to do things one's own way" on a scale of 1 (very much like me) to 7 (not at all like me).[3] I reverse coded the scale such that higher values denoted higher importance of creativity to self.

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[2] Following job search research (Kanfer, Wanberg, Kantrowitz, 2001; Saks, 2006), I limited to the sample to individuals who are below 25 years old and have never held a job before. I conducted sensitivity analyses and found consistent results even when we expanded the sample to include individuals who are below 30 years old.

[3] I conducted a separate validation study to establish the convergent validity of this item (n = 137). I included two established scales in creativity research in our validation study. The first scale is a creativity job requirement scale (Gibson & Shalley, 2004) and the second scale is a desirability of creative job characteristics scale (adapted from Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2000; Zhou & George, 2001). Among a sample of 137 early career job seekers in the U.K. and the U.S., I found that the IVS item correlated strongly with the creativity job

SES Origins. The IVS dataset included two proxies of SES origins. I test my theory with two proxies. The first proxy is participants' self-report of the social class they belonged to. Participants rated an item, "People sometimes describe themselves as belonging to the working class, the middle class, or the upper or lower class", on a scale of 1 (Upper class) to 5 (Lower class). I reverse coded the scale such that higher values denoted higher social class. The second proxy is participants' self-report of household income. Participants rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = the lowest income group in your country to 10 = the highest income group in your country, and were asked to specify what "what group your household is", "counting all wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes that come in".

Controls. I controlled for several key factors that may be associated with the importance of creativity to self, most notably education level and gender (Mursid, Nugrahadi, & Siagian, 2014). The goal was to demonstrate that SES origins predicts creativity importance over and above these variables. The findings remained consistent with or without the inclusion of control variables in the analyses (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016). I report the analyses below with control variables included.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables. As individuals were nested within countries, I tested the hypotheses using hierarchical linear modelling (HLM; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992). I found that SES origins was positively associated with importance of creativity to self in general, social class proxy: $b = 0.10$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .017$, household income proxy: $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .02$. Participants with lower SES origins indicated less similarity with the person in the statement that "It is important to this person to think up new ideas and be creative; to do things one's own way". In

requirement score, $r = .77$, $p < .001$, and with the desirability of creative job characteristics, $r = .72$, $p < .001$. These results demonstrate that the IVS item had convergent validity.

conclusion, Study 1 found evidence that people from lower SES origins (measured with different proxies) are less likely to view creativity as important to self, compared to those from higher SES origins.

Study 2

Method

In Study 1, I find that individuals from lower SES origins are less likely to view creativity as important to their selves, compared to individuals from higher SES origins. In Study 2, I seek to replicate the findings in a more controlled setting, wherein participants are from similar education backgrounds and are applying for actual jobs in a single context. I investigate whether individuals from lower SES origins are less likely to select themselves into jobs that require higher levels of creativity than individuals from higher SES origins.

Participants and Procedure

A total of 300 undergraduate students (M_{age} = 22.21, SD_{age} = 1.65, 122 male) of a Singapore public university participated in this study. All study participants were enrolled in an introductory management and human resources course offered by the business school.

Measures

Demographics. Participants completed survey questions on their age, gender, and rated their SES origins and current SES. Participants rated their SES origins using a widely used five-item measure in psychology research on social class on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (e.g., Côté, Piff, & Willer, 2013; Griskevicius et al., 2013; Griskevicius, Tybur, Delton, & Robertson, 2011; Mittal & Griskevicius, 2014; Mittal, Griskevicius, Simpson, Sung, & Young, 2015). Sample items are "I grew up in a relatively wealthy neighborhood" and "I felt relatively wealthy compared to others my age", $\alpha = 0.86$. To assess current SES, participants rated five other items. Sample items for the current SES

measure are "I live in a relatively wealthy neighborhood" and "I feel relatively wealthy compared to others my age", $\alpha = 0.83$.

Internship Codes. A research assistant, who was blind to the study's hypotheses, coded the internship descriptions provided by participants. Based on the descriptions given, the research assistant gave all internships a code according to the ONET list of occupations (e.g., 13-2011.02). I used the ONET Occupation Taxonomy because it provides information about an occupation following the ONET Content Model and its six important dimensions of requirements for every job. The most relevant dimension for my hypothesis is the occupational interest score under the worker characteristics dimension. Given that the focus of my research is on jobs with varying levels of creativity, the *Artistic* score is most relevant here.[4] The artistic score indicates how often self-expression is required and whether work can be done without following a clear set of rules in a job. As such, by giving every internship an ONET code, I was able to match each specific code to a specific artistic score.

Control Variables. To isolate the effect of SES origins, I controlled for participant characteristics including, gender, GPA, and the faculty participants belonged to, as these variables have been found to be related to job search processes (Kanfer et al., 2001). Following social class research (e.g., Kim et al., 2013), I also controlled for current SES. The findings remained consistent with or without the inclusion of control variables in the analyses (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016). I report the analyses below with control variables included.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables. Results from OLS regression analyses showed that individuals with lower SES origins were less

[4] I conducted a separate validation study to establish the convergent validity of this *Artistic* item (n = 137). This is the same validation study conducted for Study 1 (see footnote 3). Among a sample of 137 early career job seekers in the U.K. and the U.S., I found that the *Artistic* item had a positive moderate correlation with the creativity job requirement score, $r = .43$, $p < .05$, and with the desirability of creative job characteristics, $r = .39$, $p < .05$. These results demonstrate that the *Artistic* score had convergent validity.

likely to select internships that were rated highly on the *Artistic* score, whereas individuals with higher SES origins were more likely to do so, $b = 0.21$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .02$), thus supporting Hypothesis 1. In conclusion, Study 2 found that people from lower SES origins were less likely to select internships that require higher levels of creativity, compared to those from higher SES origins.

Study 3a

In Study 2, I find that individuals from lower SES origins are less likely to select themselves into internships that require higher levels of creativity, whereas individuals from higher SES origins are more likely to do so. In Study 3a, I seek to replicate my finding in an experimental setting with U.S. job seekers between 21 to 40 years old. I increased the range of ages of job seekers to see whether my hypothesis applies to job seekers beyond the age of 30.

Method

Participants, Design, and Procedure

A total of 150 employed adults ($M_{age} = 34.10$, $SD_{age} = 4.03$, $M_{working\ experience} = 15.21$, $SD_{working\ experience} = 5.70$, 45 male) recruited for this study with the assistance of a market research firm in the United States in exchange for financial compensation. All participants indicated that they were university graduates and expressed interest in looking for an alternative job during the time of the study.

Study 3a has a within-subject design with two conditions whereby participants read two different job descriptions. The order of job description presentation was counterbalanced. The first job description was for a *Marketing Research Consultant*. The second job description was for an *Operations Development Consultant.* I created the job descriptions based on the ONET definition and previous literature on job creativity requirement (Tierney & Farmer, 2011; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). After reading the job descriptions and selecting

the job that they would like to apply to, participants completed survey measures on job choice and demographic characteristics.

Measures

Manipulation Check. Participants completed a manipulation check asking them to select the job description that required more creativity, 0 = Operations Development Consultant, 1 = Marketing Research Consultant.

SES Origins and Current SES. I measured SES origins with the same five items used in Study 2 (α = .91). Similarly, I measured current SES with the same five items used in Study 2 (α = .89).

Job Choice. Participants read both job descriptions and had to choose one job that they would apply to (0 = Non-Creative Job (Operations Development Consultant), 1 = Creative Job (Marketing Research Consultant)).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Check

100% of the participants indicated that the Marketing Research Consultant was the job that required more creativity.

Main Effect Analyses (Hypothesis 1 Test)

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables. To test whether a direct effect was present, I regressed job choice on participant's SES origins, controlling for current SES. Using logistic regression, participants with higher SES origins were more likely to select the creative job (Marketing Research Consultant), whereas participants with lower SES origins were more likely to select the non-creative job (Operations Development Consultant), $b = 0.31$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = .039$, supporting Hypothesis 1. Overall, I replicated the findings from Studies 1 and 2 with a working adult sample from the United States.

Study 3b

In the three earlier studies, I find that individuals with lower SES origins are less likely to select themselves into jobs that require higher levels of creativity, whereas individuals with higher SES origins are more likely to do so. In Study 3b, I seek to replicate the same finding in an experimental setting with U.K. and U.S. early job seekers below 25 years old. Beyond replication, I extend Study 3a by testing Hypothesis 1 in an experiment where I manipulated the creative job description to be associated with a higher salary and the non-creative job description to be associated with a lower salary. If individuals with lower SES origins are still more likely to select themselves out of the job that requires higher levels of creativity but pays more, it provides stronger evidence that this process of self-selection in the labor market could ultimately contribute to the class ceiling problem.

Method

Participants, Design, and Procedure

A total of 137 early career job seekers (M_{age} = 22.17, SD_{age} = 0.82, $M_{working\ experience}$= 2.75, $SD_{working\ experience}$ = 0.76, 48 male) from an online recruitment platform participated in this experiment in exchange for financial compensation. All participants indicated that they were university graduates below 25 years old, with less than 4 years of working experience. All expressed interest in looking for an alternative job during the time of the study.

Similar to Study 3a, Study 3b has a within-subject design with two conditions whereby participants read two different job descriptions. The order of job description presentation was counterbalanced. The first job description was for a *Creative Development Management Associate.* The second job description was for a *Banking Management Associate.* Both job descriptions were created such that they were entry-level jobs, with the creative job description having a higher expected salary range and the non-creative job description with a lower expected salary range. After reading the job descriptions and

selecting the job that they would like to apply to, participants completed questions on job choice and demographic characteristics.

Measures

Manipulation Check. Participants completed a manipulation check asking them to select the job description that required more creativity, 0 = Banking Management Associate, 1 = Creative Development Management Associate.

SES Origins and Current SES. I measured SES origins with the same five items used in Studies 2 and 3a (α = .88). Similarly, I measured current SES with the same five items used in Studies 2 and 3a (α = .79).

Job Choice. Participants read both job descriptions and had to choose one job that they would apply to (0 = Non-Creative Job (Banking Management Associate), 1 = Creative Job (Creative Development Management Associate)).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Check

100% of the participants indicated that the Creative Development Management Associate was the job that required more creativity.

Main Effect Analyses (Hypothesis 1 Test)

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables. To test whether a direct effect was present, I regressed job choice on participant's SES origins, controlling for current SES. Using logistic regression, participants with higher SES origins were more likely to select the creative job (Creative Development Management Associate), whereas participants with lower SES origins were more likely to select the non-creative job (Banking Management Associate), $b = 0.64$, $SE = 0.24$, $p = .007$, supporting Hypothesis 1. Overall, I replicated the findings from Studies 1, 2, and 3a with a sample of U.K. and U.S

early job seekers. I showed that the self-selection problem still persisted despite a significant pay difference between the two jobs.

Study 4

In the earlier studies, I replicated the finding that individuals from lower SES origins are less likely to select themselves into jobs that require higher levels of creativity (even if they are better paying), whereas individuals with higher SES origins are more likely to do so. In Study 4, beyond replication of the main effect, I seek to test the mechanisms that underlie the effect of SES origins on likelihood of selecting creative jobs (Hypothesis 2).

Method

Participants, Design, and Procedure

A total of 390 undergraduate students (M_{age} = 21.33, SD_{age} = 1.55) of a Singapore public university participated in this study in exchange for course credit.[5] All study participants were enrolled in an introductory management and human resources course offered by the business school.

Participants arrived and were seated in different cubicles. This study has a within-subject design with two conditions whereby participants read two different job descriptions. The order of job description presentation was counterbalanced. I adapted the job descriptions from Study 3a and modified the details so that they were sample-appropriate. The first job description was for a *Marketing Research Consultant*. The second job description was for an *Operations Development Consultant.* Participants then completed questions about their job preference, the hypothesized mediators, and demographic characteristics.

Measures

SES Origins and Current SES. Participants rated their SES origins using another widely used measure (e.g., Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000; Goodman, Adler,

[5] Gender was not measured due to a technical error in the survey.

Kawachi, Frazier, Huang, & Colditz, 2001; Kraus & Keltner, 2009; Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009; Kraus, Tan, & Tannenbaum, 2013). In this measure, participants marked an *X* next to one of 10 rungs on a ladder ranging from 1 (*people who are worst off—who have the least money*) to 10 (*people who are best off—who have the most money*) and indicated their SES origins relative to others in the Singaporean society. Thus, this assessment of participants' visual representation captures their perceived place within a resource-based hierarchy.

Job Choice. Participants read both job descriptions and had to choose one job that they would apply to (0 = Non-Creative Job (Operations Development Consultant), 1 = Creative Job (Marketing Research Consultant)).

Self-Concerns about Competence and Fit. Participants rated three items assessing the level of competence they think they have for the job (adapted from Fiske et al., 2002). Sample items are "I am not confident in my competence for the job" and "I do not have all the skills needed to perform this job well", $\alpha = 0.93$. Participants then rated another four items measuring the level of fit they think they have with the workplace offering the job (adapted from Fiske et al., 2002). Sample items are "I am not confident in my ability to fit in socially in the workplace offering this job" and "I may not be able to "connect" with others in the firm offering this job", $\alpha = 0.93$. Participants rated all items on a bipolar scale (1 = Operations Development Consultant, 7 = Marketing Research Consultant).

Results and Discussion

Main Effect Analyses (Hypothesis 1 Test)

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables. To test whether a direct effect was present, I regressed job choice on participant's SES origins, controlling for current SES. Using logistic regression, I found a significant effect of SES origins on job choice, $b = 0.18$, $SE = 0.17$, $p = .007$. Participants with higher SES origins were more likely to select the creative job (Marketing Research Consultant), whereas

participants with lower SES origins were more likely to select the non-creative job (Operations Development Consultant). Overall, the findings support Hypothesis 1.

Mediation Effect Analyses (Hypothesis 2 Test)

A mediation test with bootstrapping at 5,000 resamples provided evidence that self-concerns about both competence (b = 0.11, SE = 0.06, 95% CI [0.01, 0.23]) and fit (b = 0.07, SE = 0.03, 95% CI [0.01, 0.14]) mediated the relationship between SES origins and job choice.

Overall, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported. The findings demonstrate that the mechanisms underlying the job choices of individuals from different SES origins are self-concerns about competence and fit.

General Discussion

In the examination of how applicants select themselves into creative jobs, I uncover a novel pathway via which the class ceiling perpetuates in organizations today. I theorize that individuals from lower SES origins select themselves out of creative jobs due to specific socialization patterns, even if these creative jobs have a larger potential to increase their socioeconomic mobility and status. Indeed, my findings from five studies consistently indicate that individuals from lower SES origins find creativity to be less important to them and are more likely to select themselves out of creative jobs, compared to individuals from higher SES origins. Moreover, I demonstrate that this effect is due to individuals' evaluations about their own competence for the job and ability to fit in with other creative people.

Theoretical Implications

My research contributes to the emerging body of research that aims to address the growing inequality in societies today (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009) by systematically examining class ceiling problem in organizations. In particular, I investigate the self-selection process during labor market engagement as a novel supply-side mechanism underlying the

persistence of class ceiling in our workplaces today. Creative jobs have been often perceived as desirable and afforded relatively higher status compared to other non-creative jobs, yet I find that individuals from lower SES origins are more likely to select jobs that require less creativity, whereas individuals from higher SES origins are more likely to select jobs that are require more creativity. Understanding now that individuals from lower SES origins choose to avoid these creative (high status) jobs at the beginning of and throughout their careers shed light on the labor market stratification processes and why levels of occupational attainment in the future can vastly differ among individuals with different SES origins. Furthermore, these employment experiences accumulate over time and potentially cement individuals' perceptions about their suitability for particular career paths and their efficacy beliefs about achieving success in these paths.

Second, my research has important implications for the career preferences literature. I demonstrate that SES origins is an important factor contributing to one's career preferences. Individuals from lower SES origins undergo different socialization patterns since young that have been constantly reinforced in contexts outside of familial settings, such as schools and the larger community. These socialization patterns include an emphasis on interdependence on others, the encouragement of risk-aversion tendencies because of material-related uncertainty, and the lack of leisure activities. As such, when it comes to creative jobs where people are expected to be expressive and independent, and also demonstrate knowledge of different cultural elements to fit with others, individuals from lower SES origins choose to opt out. While demand-side focused research has shown that cultural matching often takes place from the employers' point of view (e.g., Koppman, 2015; Rivera, 2012), I highlight that a similar process also occurs from the applicants' point of view. The self-selection process during labor market engagement is arguably even more crucial to examine as it eventually defines the pool of candidates that employers can choose from. Moreover, my work

consistently showcases that the self-selection process occurs because of self-evaluation about competence and fit.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although my research makes notable contributions to various research bodies, limitations still exist. First, in all studies, I did not manipulate SES origins to demonstrate a causal relationship between SES origins and choice to enter creative jobs. However, my findings from all studies are robust and consistent. Moreover, it may not be feasible or realistic to manipulate SES origins given that it is a demographic variable that has influenced how individuals function over their lifetime. Future research should further examine the issue of causality in social class research. Second, most of the studies' measures were self-report in nature. I acknowledge the limitations of self-report data, especially the potential for common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Nonetheless, it was appropriate for me to test the hypotheses on self-selection processes using self-report data. Moreover, Study 2 examined job choice by employing raters to code objective internship descriptions that were eventually matched to O*NET scores, and the findings were replicated in Studies 3 and 4. Future research should examine related hypotheses using objective measures and other-rated data.

Practical Implications and Conclusion

The findings suggest several implications for organizational practice as well as for individuals. A core implication for organizations is that hiring processes or materials that heavily promote creativity, or being independent and expressive, may be negatively construed by potential candidates such that they perceive that they are not suitable for the available jobs even if they have the potential to be so. One possible method to counter this would be for organizations to also emphasize that they value employees with high learning orientation and who are willing to undergo training. As such, even if potential candidates

with lower SES origins perceive themselves to lack competence and fit, those higher on learning orientation may still apply to these jobs and eventually be able to succeed in these job positions as well. Next, a core implication for individuals is that they should be aware of how strongly their SES origins can influence their future career path. While individuals from lower SES origins may not be initially comfortable with jobs that require them to behave incongruently with their selves and upbringing, they should be cognizant of how early exposure to other professions can build their confidence and further accumulate social capital that will benefit them in their career paths.

Taken together, my research reveals an important self-selection mechanism that contributes to the class ceiling problem in organizations. My findings show that when individuals come from lower SES origins, they are more likely to select themselves out of creative jobs, compared to individuals from higher SES origins. I find that this effect is due to an individual's self-evaluation about competence and fit. I hope that my work underscores the importance of research in this area, as doing so can mitigate the class ceiling issue that abounds in organizations today.

Chapter 2: Class Ceiling in the Newcomer Adjustment Context: A Supply-Side Psychological Explanation

In line with models of in-group preference (Byrne, 1971; Whitley & Kite, 2006), most past research on class (dis)advantage has focused on the possibility that supervisors, who tend to be disproportionally from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Dorling, 2014; Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2010; Goldthorpe, 2013; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991), might exhibit favoritism toward employees with similar (higher) SES backgrounds, thus disadvantaging workers from lower SES backgrounds (e.g., Koppman, 2016; Pfeffer, 1977; Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). Most of these studies have focused on possible discrimination in the labor market, but found relatively weak (i.e., no direct effect; Koppman, 2016) or no evidence (e.g., Pfeffer, 1977) that workers with lower SES origins are discriminated against at the time of hiring. Thus, it seems that many, if not most class-related challenges underlying the class achievement gap occur after entry. At present, little research has focused on these challenges and it is unclear what they are. To advance the understanding of the sources of class challenges in organizations, I conducted a year-long longitudinal study focusing on the sensitive and challenging transition period after entry, during which newcomers adjust to new organizations, with notable implications for longer-term career success (Bauer et al., 2007; Morrison, 1993).

I extend past explanations for challenges faced by workers with lower SES origins by introducing a new perspective that highlights the role of workers' own psychology and behavior in explaining why the class ceiling emerges after workers join organizations. I integrate research on long-term psychological effects of growing up in a lower SES environment (Ayoub et al., 2017; Kraus et al., 2011; Orth et al., 2018; Stephens et al., 2014) with research on objective career success (Ng et al., 2005), to construct my model. This theoretical integration allowed me to identify a key factor that is an important predictor of

career success and which is at the same time likely to be impacted by long term psychological differences as a function of SES background—social capital development (Ashford & Black, 1996; Eby et al., 2003; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Wolff & Moser, 2009). Social capital is a major factor shaping differences in achievement among workers (Ng et al., 2005), particularly those who already possess high levels of human capital and technical competence. At the same time, psychological research on long term effects of growing up in a lower SES environment suggests the possibility that individuals with lower SES origins might experience relatively more social concerns and anxiety in social interactions, compared to their higher SES counterparts, potentially undermining tendency to network and develop social capital after organizational entry (Ayoub et al., 2017; Kraus et al., 2011; Orth et al., 2018).

This study also allowed me to test both the past perspective focused on supervisors' potential bias against (in favor of) workers from lower (higher) SES backgrounds (which I refer to as a *demand-side* explanation), as well as my proposed explanation focusing on the role of psychology and behavior of workers themselves (*supply-side* explanation). I acknowledge at the outset that both processes are likely relevant, and the focus on supply-side processes is by no means an attempt to blame the victim. Understanding supply-side processes that contribute to disadvantage is important because it might uncover additional and different set of solutions from those implied by detected demand-side problems. In this case, if my theory concerning the role of psychology and behavior of workers themselves in partly explaining the class ceiling is correct, it would imply that a broader set of stakeholders, such as families and educational institutions, might need to be involved in promoting class inclusion in the domain of work.

I focus on business organizations in the finance and banking industry because the class gap has been found to be particularly pronounced in this domain (Laurison & Friedman,

2015; Pfeffer, 1977). The same consideration of relevance of class issues led me to focus on India, which is characterized by a history of particularly stark class-related divisions and challenges. India has the largest class-related affirmative action program in history, focusing on provision of educational opportunities (Bagde et al., 2016; Munshi & Rosenzweig, 2006). However, studies in this context are rare, and it remains unclear whether workers with lower SES origins manage to adjust successfully after joining organizations. I followed 531 newcomers who joined organizations in banking and finance industries right after graduating from college over the course of a year and also collected data from their 113 supervisors. This provided me with a controlled sample, allowing for a unique insight into challenges workers from lower SES backgrounds face after organizational entry.

Theory and Hypotheses

Social capital is commonly conceptualized as the valuable social resources that are embedded in one's network of relationships (Coleman, 1990; Lin, 1999; Fang et al., 2011). Similarly, social capital development behaviors refer to "activities of individuals aimed at developing relationships with others who have the potential to asst them in their careers" (Ng & Feldman, 2010: 700). The focus on social capital development is logical given my focus on upwardly mobile newcomers, who have similar educational qualifications and technical competence, and yet naturally vary in their socioeconomic origins. Among workers with high and comparable human capital and technical competence, social capital tends to be the main factor explaining differences in achievement (Bauer et al., 2007; Morrison, 1993, 2002; Ng et al., 2005). I focus on supply-side factors, i.e., the psychology and behavior of workers themselves, given the lack of focus on supply-side factors in past research on the source of the class ceiling, as detailed above, and the key insight of the newcomer adjustment literature that the success of the newcomer adjustment process often largely depends on newcomers themselves (Allen et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2005).

Social capital development has been examined as a set of interrelated behaviors exhibited by individuals aimed at building and maintaining social capital (Forret & Dougherty, 2001, 2004; Michael & Yukl, 1993). Examples of social capital development behaviors are introducing oneself to peers and other organizational actors, actively participating in social functions, or seeking high visibility assignments. Developing social capital has been shown to be one of the most effective career management strategies (Ng et al., 2005; Seibert et al., 2001; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999). It is crucial for successful newcomer adjustment because social resources provide access to information, social support, and a source of referent power (Lin, 1982). In support of this notion, Fang and colleagues (2011) theorized and found that having access to social capital and successful mobilization of social capital lead to positive newcomer adjustment and future career success. Morrison (2002) similarly examined the effect of friendship and advice ties on newcomer adjustment and found that stronger connections within the organization facilitate newcomers' adjustment success. Benefits of higher accumulated social capital extend beyond social integration and adjustment proxies (e.g., Gruman, Saks, & Zweig, 2006), and involve such outcomes as higher sense of person-organization fit (Gruman et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2005), and higher job satisfaction (Ashford & Black, 1996).

SES is a major determinant of people's life circumstances and thus growing up in a lower versus higher SES environment leaves a complex, long-term psychological mark on individuals (Ayoub et al., 2018; Kish-Gephart & Campbell, 2015; Orth et al., 2018). Lower SES origins can be experienced as a negative identity characteristic or even a stigma (Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, & Kowai-Bell, 2001; Côté, 2011), which should be particularly relevant in social situations and lead to social anxiety. For example, Croizet and Claire (1998) found that lower SES individuals experience stereotype threat when social class background is made salient, which can lead to lowered self-confidence (Spencer & Castano,

2007). Indeed, personality research finds that individuals with lower SES origins tend to have relatively lower long-term self-esteem (Orth et al., 2018). These psychological consequences of growing up in a lower SES environment should matter in social situations and impact whether people are comfortable engaging in behaviors aimed at developing social capital. For example, Forret and Dougherty (2001) found in a large sample of managers and professionals that higher self-esteem levels predicted social capital development behaviors, such as engaging in professional activities, maintaining contacts, and attempting to improve visibility in the workplace.

Gray and Kish-Gephart (2013) theorized that stereotype threat and social anxiety experienced by lower SES workers should be particularly salient when they work among people from more privileged backgrounds and regularly engage in cross-class workplace interactions. While some degree of social anxiety may occur among most newcomers (Bauer et al., 2007), social anxiety should be particularly pronounced among newcomers with lower SES origins because most workplaces that upwardly mobile workers enter are dominated by middle- and upper-class individuals and norms (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2010; Stephens et al., 2014; Whitely et al., 1991). Research in educational psychology shows that lower SES freshmen face concerns about belonging when they enter college, another context dominated by individuals with more advantaged SES origins (Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, & Darnon, 2017). For instance, Stephens, Townsend, Markus, and Phillips (2012) found that college students from lower SES backgrounds experience a sense of misfit because institutes of higher learning tend to be dominated by individuals with higher SES origins and thus tend to be characterized by higher-SES values and norms. The experience of entering a higher-status organization dominated by workers with more advantaged origins may be similar to the experience of entering college in that lower SES newcomers are more likely to feel like they "do not belong" (Jury et al., 2017).

Newcomers with lower SES origins may also be at a disadvantage in terms of their ability to suppress or manage social anxiety that occurs in new work settings. For instance, a large meta-analysis (Ayoub et al., 2018) found that, controlling for respondents' education and current social class, being brought up in a lower SES family was associated with higher levels of neuroticism, and research by Kraus et al. (2011) demonstrated that higher emotional reactivity among individuals with lower SES origins tends to be particularly pronounced with regards to social targets and situations. Higher social self-concerns (Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013; Stephens et al., 2014) and emotional reactivity (Ayoub et al., 2018; Peverill, Dirks, Narvaja, Herts, Comer, & McLaughlin, 2020) potentially act in tandem to shape higher social anxiety.

Research shows that socially anxious individuals tend to exhibit avoidant and inhibited behaviors, as well as negative, self-focused cognitions across various social settings (Langston & Cantor, 1989; Leary, 2001; Patterson & Ritts, 1997; Leary & Schlenker, 1981). Higher levels of social anxiety are associated with negative interpersonal as well as academic and career-related outcomes. For instance, Cheng, Wang, Sigerson, and Chau (2019) found that social anxiety was negatively related to social capital. Ericson and Gardner (1992) examined communication apprehension among college students with similar GPAs and found that those higher in communication apprehension were significantly more likely to drop out of college compared to those lower in communication apprehension. Thus, given the negative interpersonal behaviors and cognitions associated with social anxiety, I posit that the experience of social anxiety in a new workplace would negatively influence lower SES newcomers' social capital development.

Taken together, I propose that newcomers with lower SES origins will experience higher levels of social anxiety when adjusting to a new workplace, which will undermine their social capital development behaviors. Given the importance of social capital for

adjustment success and downstream career success, this theorizing identifies social anxiety and social capital development as a potential supply-side source of the class achievement gap after newcomers join organizations. I examine these downstream consequences for newcomers' achievement by focusing on leaders' evaluations, collected one year after newcomers joined the organization, of 1) newcomers' promotability, and 2) newcomers' likelihood of being provided with training opportunities. Promotion potential is a key indicator of career success (Ng et al., 2005; Wayne et al., 1999), and, as I elaborate below, a meaningful proxy in this context given that some (but not all) newcomers start being promoted to higher-level positions and assignments after the initial one-year period and given that supervisors (who are providing promotability evaluations) tend to play a role in whether promotions occur. In a similar vein, training opportunities are important for career development and success (Ng et al., 2005; Wayne et al., 1999), and also tend to play an important role in upward career mobility in the context of I focus on. The combined model is summarized in Figure 1. I predict as follows:

Hypothesis 1: *There is a positive relationship between newcomer SES origins and social capital development behaviors.*

Hypothesis 2: *Social anxiety mediates the relationship between newcomer SES origins and social capital development behaviors.*

Hypothesis 3a (b): *There is a positive relationship between newcomer SES origins and promotability (access to training opportunities).*

Hypothesis 4a (b): *Social anxiety and social capital development serially mediate the relationship between newcomer SES origins and promotability (access to training opportunities).*

Overview of Research

Given my focus on potential sources of the class ceiling problem in the newcomer adjustment context, the ideal sample within which to test my theory is a sample of newcomers who are transitioning from higher education to their first jobs. Ideally, these newcomers should have comparable educational qualifications and technical competence, in line with the focus on workers who are upwardly mobile (those who have secured educational opportunities and high level of human capital). Guided by my theory and the different practical considerations, I identified a sample of newcomers in the banking and finance industries in India and followed them across their one-year adjustment period.

In this study, I provide an empirical test of both the novel theoretical explanation (supply-side) and the existing (demand-side) explanation for the class ceiling. To test the similarity bias explanation of the class ceiling, I examined the interaction between newcomer SES origins and supervisor SES origins in predicting promotability and access to training opportunities. If workers with lower SES origins are most disadvantaged in terms of promotability and access to training opportunities when working with sueprvisors from higher SES origins, that would represent evidence of a similarity bias. To additionally and more directly test for bias against lower SES workers, I also examined supervisor's liking of newcomers. Liking is the most common proxy of favoritism in the ingroup bias and discrimination tradition (Amodio & Devine, 2006; Barrick, Swider, & Stewart, 2010; García, Posthuma, & Colella, 2008; Lewis & Sherman, 2003; Mullen & Skitka, 2006), and has been also the main way in which bias has been operationalized in the organizational literature. For example, in research on selection, liking as a basis of allocating positive outcomes (e.g., job offers) is typically viewed as unmeritocratic and biased, in contrast to "merit-based" allocation (e.g., on the basis of qualifications) (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Mishra, 2011; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). Measuring liking allowed for a comprehensive test of bias

against lower SES workers by examining whether 1) on average, regardless of supervisor SES origins, lower SES workers are liked less (capturing any bias against lower SES newcomers), and 2) whether lower SES workers are liked less at higher levels of supervisor SES origins (capturing similarity-based bias against lower SES newcomers).

I provide a test of the proposed supply-side explanation by measuring social anxiety shortly after newcomers join the organization and examining how it predicts social capital development behaviors during the rest of the first year of the adjustment process. To additionally probe the theoretical specificity of my explanation focusing on social anxiety (as opposed to anxiety more generally), I measured and delineated general task anxiety experienced by newcomers from social anxiety specifically.

Methods

Participants and Design

I identified banks and financial consulting firms by contacting HR managers (with the help of local staff) and proposed research collaboration on the topic of newcomer adjustment success. The firms in the sample include leading corporations in India's financial sector. The specific topic of the research study was not communicated to the firms in advance, and thus self-selection into the sample was unlikely. The job cycle in India is such that newcomers (i.e., university graduates) typically join organizations in July after graduation. Thus, I began the data collection in August and administered four waves of surveys to newcomers and their supervisors over the following year, with a three-month gap between the waves. All data were collected using pen and paper surveys with a survey administrator physically present.

At Time 1 (T1), I gathered data from 122 supervisors (M_{age} = 35.82, SD_{age} = 4.63, 101 male) and 578 newcomers (M_{age} = 23.90, SD_{age} = 2.09; 413 male) out of 175 supervisors and 780 newcomers approached (69.71% initial response rate for supervisors and 74.10% for newcomers). Approximately three months later, at Time 2 (T2), I collected data from 113

supervisors (M_{age} = 35.89, SD_{age} = 4.41, 93 male) and 531 newcomers (M_{age} = 23.90, SD_{age} = 2.09; 413 male) (92.62% participation for supervisors and 91.87% for newcomers). Approximately three months later (T3), and approximately another three months later (T4), I gathered data from all participants in T2 (100% participation from both supervisors and newcomers). All survey materials were presented in English, which was the language spoken in all firms.

Procedure and Materials

At T1, supervisors and newcomers completed measures of their demographics (age, gender, SES origins, current SES, education, level in the company, and total years of work experience). At T2, newcomers completed measures on social anxiety, task anxiety, and social capital development behaviors, whereas supervisors completed a measure on liking of newcomers. At T3, newcomers and supervisors completed the same measures as in T2. Finally, at T4, newcomers and supervisors completed the same measures as in T2 and T3, whereas supervisors also completed measures of promotability and training opportunities. I measured supervisors' willingness to endorse newcomers for such opportunities, which was a particularly consequential proxy given that supervisors typically nominate or otherwise endorse a limited number of their newcomers for promotion and training opportunities (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995). I used a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise stated.

Measures

SES Origins (T1). Given the complexity of measuring perceptions of social class and status (e.g., participants might respond in a socially desirable manner; or be unable to accurately recall family finances during childhood; Côté, 2011), I assessed SES origins using two different proxies and report all hypotheses tests in the paper using each proxy as well as their aggregate scores.

First, newcomers and supervisors responded to a standard measure of SES origins (Horberg, Oveis, Keltner, & Cohen, 2009) (1 = *Lower class,* 2 = *Working class,* 3 = *Lower middle class,* 4 = *Upper middle class,* 5 = *Upper class*). Second, I asked participants to rate their SES origins using another widely used measure (e.g., Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000). In this measure, participants marked an *X* next to one of 10 rungs on a ladder ranging from 1 (*people who are worst off—who have the least money*) to 10 (*people who are best off—who have the most money*) and indicated their SES origins relative to others in the Indian society. Thus, this assessment of participants' visual representation captures their perceived place within a resource-based hierarchy.

Because the two measures of SES origins were highly related ($r = .66$, $p < .001$; $\alpha = .95$), I tested the hypotheses using an integrated SES origins score. The score was computed by standardizing each measure and then taking their average. I report results using the integrated SES origins score. The results remained consistent among the SES proxies used for analyses.

Social Anxiety (T2 – T4). Newcomers rated how much social anxiety they felt in the workplace using six items (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Sample items include, "I feel anxious when I speak in front of a group", and "I get embarrassed very easily", ($\alpha_{T2} = 0.83$, $\alpha_{T3} = 0.75$, $\alpha_{T4} = 0.85$).

Task Anxiety (T2 – T4). Newcomers rated how much task anxiety they felt in the workplace using eight items (McCarthy, Trougakos, & Cheng, 2016). Sample items include, "I am overwhelmed by thoughts of doing poorly at work", and "I worry about not receiving a positive job performance evaluation", ($\alpha_{T2} = 0.75$, $\alpha_{T3} = 0.83$, $\alpha_{T4} = 0.83$).

Social Capital Development Behaviors (T2 – T4). Newcomers rated the different social capital development behaviors they engaged in within the workplace (Wolff & Moser, 2009) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *never* to 5 = *A great deal*). There were two subscales:

Building Contacts (6 items; e.g., "I use company events to make new contacts"; $\alpha_{T2} = 0.81$, $\alpha_{T3} = 0.80$, $\alpha_{T4} = 0.82$) and Maintaining Contacts (8 items; e.g., "I catch up with colleagues from other departments about what they are working on"; $\alpha_{T2} = 0.87$, $\alpha_{T3} = 0.71$, $\alpha_{T4} = 0.77$). I averaged the two subscales to compute an overall social capital development behavior score for each time wave.

Supervisor Liking of Newcomer (T2 – T4). Supervisors rated how much they liked each newcomer on four items (Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Sample items include, "I like this employee" and "I think this subordinate would make a good friend" ($\alpha_{T2} = 0.84$, $\alpha_{T3} = 0.80$, $\alpha_{T4} = 0.77$).

Promotability (T4). Supervisors rated the promotability of each newcomer on five items (Paustian-Underdahl, Halbesleben, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2016). The newcomer with the highest promotability potential was given the score 1 and the newcomer with the lowest promotability potential was given the score 4 or 5 (depending on how many newcomers are in the team; each supervisor oversaw a group of either 4 or 5 newcomers). Within each team, the score for each item was then reversed and items were averaged together to form an overall promotability score for each member. The measure thus mapped onto the nature of promotability in this context (as in many other contexts) in the sense that relative standing among newcomers (as evaluated by supervisors) commonly serves as a basis for promotion and training opportunities. Sample items include, "I would ensure that this employee has a successful career in my department" and "I will make effort to promote this employee" (α = .69).

Training Opportunities (T4). Supervisors rated their willingness to assign training opportunities to each of the employees using a four-item measure taken from Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997). As with the promotability measure, and following the same rationale, the newcomer with the highest likelihood to receive training opportunities was given the score of

1 and the newcomer with the lowest likelihood was given the score of 4 or 5 (depending on how many newcomers were in the team). Within each team, the score for each item was then reversed and items were averaged together to form an overall score of access to training opportunities for each member. Sample items include, "I will assign projects to this subordinate that will enable him/her to develop and strengthen new skills", "Besides formal training and development opportunities, I will help to develop this subordinate's skills by providing him/her with challenging job assignments" ($\alpha = .65$).

Control Variables. To isolate the effect of SES origins, I controlled for newcomer demographic characteristics including, newcomer age, newcomer education, newcomer gender, and newcomer's hierarchical level in the organization, as these variables have been found to be related to newcomer adjustment success (Lapointe, Vandenberghe, & Boudrias, 2013; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007). Following social class research (e.g., Kim et al., 2013), I also controlled for newcomer current income. I note that the findings remained consistent with or without the inclusion of control variables in the analyses (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016). I report the analyses below with control variables included.

Results

Discriminant Validity

To examine discriminant validity, I conduct confirmatory factor analyses on the four newcomer self-reported scales: social anxiety, task anxiety, and two social capital development behaviors (Table 2). Results indicated that a four-factor model fit the data well: $\chi^2(584) = 1126.90$, $p < .001$, CFI = .94, TLI = .94, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = 03, with all factor loadings statistically significant, $p < .05$. In addition, model fit was significantly better for the four-factor model compared with three other models (see Table 1 for nested model comparisons). I also separately conducted confirmatory factor analyses on the three supervisor self-reported scales: promotability, training opportunities, and liking of newcomer

(Table 2). The three-factor measurement model fit the data well: $\chi^2(62) = 163.81$, $p < .001$, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, SRMR = .03, RMSEA = 03, and all factor loadings were statistically significant, $p < .05$. Model fit was also better for the three-factor model compared with two other models (see Table 2 for nested model comparisons). In addition, Jöreskog's ρ values (1971) were .89 or higher, indicating good internal consistency for the measurement models.

Main Analyses

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. Because newcomers were nested within supervisors, I tested the hypotheses using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992). I report results using the SES integrated score in Tables 3–6; additionally, I found consistent results when using the two SES origins proxies separately in the analyses.

SES Origins, Social Anxiety, and Social Capital Development

I found a positive relationship between newcomer SES origins and social capital development behaviors at T2 (Model 1 in Table 3). Newcomers with lower SES origins were less likely to build and maintain their internal networks compared to those with higher SES origins. Similarly, at T3 and T4 (Models 3 and 5 in Table 3), I also found significant positive effects of newcomer SES origins on social capital development behaviors. Consistent results were also found when aggregating the scores across the three waves (Model 7 in Table 3). Hypothesis 1 is thus supported.

To explain this gap in social capital development behavior, I added the corresponding social anxiety and task anxiety scores at each time wave as predictors into the same regression models. At T2, I found that social anxiety was negatively related to social capital development behaviors, whereas task anxiety was not related to social capital development behaviors (Model 2 in Table 3). Similarly, at T3 (Model 4 in Table 3) and at T4 (Model 6 in Table 3), I also found significant negative effects of social anxiety, but not task-related

anxiety, on social capital development behaviors. I aggregated the scores across the three waves and again found consistent results (Model 8 in Table 3).

This indicates that anxiety in the social domain might explain the class gap in social capital development behaviors, and that the effect is specific to social as opposed to task-related anxiety. To test the mediation effect of social anxiety, I calculated bootstrap confidence intervals of the product of each path, estimated using the same analysis as above, and based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. The indirect effect of employee SES origins on social capital development behaviors via social anxiety was significant, although only at the 90% confidence level, $b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.04]. This finding indicates that newcomer with lower (compared to higher) SES origins experience more social anxiety, which leads to lower social capital development behaviors. Hypothesis 2 is thus supported, albeit only at the .10 level and taking into account it was a directional hypothesis.[6]

Implications for the Class Ceiling

I next examined whether there was evidence of the class ceiling in this context. There was a significant positive effect of newcomer SES origins on supervisors' promotability ratings (Model 1 in Table 5), and supervisors' training opportunities ratings (Model 3 in Table 5), meaning that newcomers with lower SES origins were rated lower by supervisors in terms of endorsement for promotion as well as training opportunities than were newcomers with higher SES origins at the end of a one-year adjustment period. Thus, Hypotheses 3a and 3b are supported.

I next examined whether the documented class social capital development gap explains (serially mediates) the class gap in promotability and access to training opportunities, using the same mediation testing procedure as above. The indirect effect of newcomer SES origins on promotability via social anxiety and social capital development

[6] Please refer to Table 4 for the effect of SES origins on social anxiety in each time wave.

behaviors was significant, $b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.02]. The indirect effect of newcomer SES origins on training opportunities was also significant, $b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.02]. These findings indicate that newcomer with lower (compared to higher) SES origins experience more social anxiety, which results in lower social capital development behaviors, and eventually lower promotability and lower access to training opportunities. Hypotheses 4a and 4b are thus supported.

Is There Evidence of a (General or Similarity-Driven) Bias?

Next, I explored the alternative, similarity bias explanation for the class ceiling problem. To do so, I first examined the interaction between newcomer SES origins and supervisor SES origins on promotability and allocation of training opportunities. Results showed that supervisor SES origins did not moderate the relationship between newcomer SES origins and promotability and allocation of training opportunities (Models 2 and 4 in Table 5). Thus, it seems that supervisors from higher SES origins were not systematically biased in favor of newcomers with higher SES origins, suggesting no evidence of similarity bias in this context and when tested using this particular approach.

I next examined whether newcomers with lower SES origins received overall lower liking scores by supervisors, which would indicate an overall bias against such workers. At T2, the negative effect of newcomer SES origins on supervisor liking of newcomer was significant (Model 1 in Table 6), showing that, on average, supervisors liked newcomers of lower SES origins *more*. At T3 and T4 (Model 3 and 5 in Table 6), there was no effect of newcomer SES origins on liking. I also aggregated the liking scores across all time waves and found that there was no overall effect of newcomer SES origins on the aggregated outcome (Model 7 in Table 6). Finally, I tested the interaction between newcomer and supervisor SES origins in predicting liking across different time waves, finding it to be non-significant (Models 2, 4, 6, and 8 in Table 6). Thus, I found no evidence of either a general

bias or a similarity-driven bias (as proxied by supervisors' own SES origins) against newcomers with lower SES origins in this one-year adjustment period.

Discussion

Motivated by the evidence of the class ceiling problem, I identified the newcomer adjustment process as a crucial period where the class gap starts to emerge and conducted a year-long field study among newcomers in the finance and banking industry, in which the issue has been highlighted as particularly salient (Laurison & Friedman, 2016; Pfeffer, 1977), to investigate origins of the class achievement gap in organizations. I find strong support for the novel supply-side explanation that the class ceiling problem (SES-based differences in two important downstream adjustment outcomes of promotability and training opportunities) emerges as a function of newcomer social anxiety and newcomer social capital development. I find that newcomers with lower SES origins are disadvantaged in new social situations compared to newcomers with higher SES origins, setting them back in terms of social capital development in the first year of work, which eventually contributes to the emergence of a class achievement gap in adjustment outcomes at the end of the first year. This research also provides a strong field test of the potential role of supervisor bias (whether general or driven by similarity in SES origins) against lower SES newcomers after organizational entry. Similar to previous research (Koppman, 2016; Pfeffer, 1977; Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016), I find little evidence of supervisor bias in the first year of newcomers' employment.

Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the growing body of work on organizational inclusiveness by focusing on supply-side micro-level mechanisms underlying the class ceiling problem. As discussed earlier, most research examining the class ceiling problem has taken a demand-side perspective, focusing on supervisors' potential bias and discriminatory behavior against workers from lower SES origins. I tested this mechanism in this study and found no

supporting evidence for supervisors' similarity bias against lower SES newcomers in the first year of newcomers' employment, consistent with the past studies in the literature (Koppman, 2016; Pfeffer, 1977; Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). In fact, I found that in T2 (six months post-entry), supervisors showed higher levels of liking toward newcomers with lower SES origins rather than those with higher SES origins. Nonetheless, the field study results provided evidence for the supply-side explanation highlighting psychological differences among individuals as a function of their SES origins. By integrating newcomer adjustment research (Bauer et al., 2007) with research in psychology of social class (Stephens et al., 2014), my theorizing helps explain how the class ceiling problem emerges early on in people's careers during newcomer adjustment period as a function of social anxiety and subsequent social capital development in the workplace. A systematic understanding of supply-side processes, in addition to demand-side processes, is important as it points to a novel set of potential solutions for the class achievement gap. More investigation of the class ceiling problem incorporating both explanations is needed to further enrich these initial findings and the extant literature that has focused on the demand-side perspective.

The focus on the newcomer adjustment context enables me to pinpoint when and why the class ceiling problem starts to emerge. This period, which is sensitive and challenging (Allen et al., 2017; Bauer et al., 2007), is crucial for subsequent career success. It is thus an important period to ensure that newcomers with lower SES origins do not fall behind. The findings shed some light on how this particular source of the class ceiling could be addressed before the class gap is further widened post-adjustment. For instance, theoretically driven interventions can be scientifically designed and implemented by organizations to address the experience of social anxiety as well as help develop social capital development skills among newcomers, thus improving overall adjustment outcomes. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, there is relatively little work on implications of the newcomer adjustment process for

inclusion or challenges faced by those from socially disadvantaged groups. By situating the theory and empirics in this context, this work opens up avenues for future work to focus on important social implications in the newcomer adjustment literature.

Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations of the current work, and the associated avenues for future research are important to highlight. First, regarding the sample, I was able to collaborate with major banks and financial institutions in India to investigate demand- and supply-side factors that contribute to the class ceiling problem among newcomers who recently graduated from college. Although this was arguably the most relevant context given the theoretical focus, these advantages come with tradeoffs, including being restricted to a single country and a limited range of jobs. Given the generally limited amount of field studies on organizational dynamics contributing to the class ceiling, future research in other settings is certainly warranted, including research in other countries and other industry contexts.

My theory focused on identifying different mechanisms that might contribute to the class ceiling problem. Although I identified social anxiety and social capital development behaviors as supply-side mechanisms that contributes to a class gap in adjustment outcomes, I did not investigate potential individual or situational characteristics that might buffer the negative effects of having a lower SES background. Fortunately, psychological research on social class has highlighted several psychological dispositions that lower SES individuals have that can potentially be utilized and tapped on in the workplace (e.g., Stephens et al., 2014). For example, Dittmann et al. (2020) proposed that the relatively more interdependent self-construal among workers from lower SES backgrounds affords them an advantage when working in teams. They found support for this idea across a series of studies among students, collegiate student-athletes, and online participants. This suggests that even though lower SES newcomers experience social anxiety, they tend to be other-focused and working closely

together with other members early on could help them more effectively integrate socially. Future research is needed to examine boundary conditions, such as team interdependence, that might mitigate the challenges faced by newcomers from lower SES origins.

Practical Implications and Conclusion

The most important practical implication of these findings is that more attention should be paid to supply-side factors that could contribute to the emergence of a class achievement gap during the newcomer adjustment period. Organizations and organizational researchers have been sensitive to the challenging and intricate nature of the newcomer adjustment process, but not sufficiently to the possibility that such challenges might systematically undermine members of certain social groups. Organizations should thus be more cognizant of implications of the newcomer adjustment process for inclusion and in the longer run implement scientifically designed interventions that can address these supply-side concerns. For example, organizations can intervene to assist upwardly mobile newcomers in developing relevant social skills (e.g., social skill workshops as part of organizational socialization processes) that enable them to effectively maneuver social situations in the new work environment. Beyond that, other major stakeholders such as educational and governmental institutions can be involved earlier on to ensure comparable skills relevant to capital development are developed regardless of SES origins.

By broadening the understanding of the class ceiling problem through the supply-side perspective, we can uncover important solutions targeting lower SES newcomers and attenuate the class achievement gap before it can widen further. Furthermore, improving their adjustment outcomes will benefit organizations as well. Specifically, there are negative "implications for economic efficiency if the talents of those from poorer families are underdeveloped or not fully utilized, as those from poorer backgrounds will not live up to their productive potential" (Blanden, 2013: 38).

Chapter 3: Reversing the Social Class Disadvantage: A Psychological Intervention in the Newcomer Adjustment Context

Broadly speaking, issues that workers with lower SES origins face are social in nature. They appear to experience a more difficult time getting along with organizational incumbents at the time of hiring (Koppman, 2016; Rivera, 2012). They also seem to face challenges integrating and navigating the organizational social sphere when they do manage to join as employees, as indicated, for example, by findings that workers from lower SES origins develop smaller networks (Carey & Markus, 2017; Smith et al., 2012) and benefit less from mentorship (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Whitely et al., 1991), and that the class achievement gap is more pronounced in organizations in which social factors matter more for success (Pfeffer, 1977). These findings stand in stark contrast with a vast body of research in social psychology suggesting that lower SES individuals possess many social *advantages*, including stronger other-orientation (Piff et al., 2010; Piff et al., 2012), an important predictor of success (Flynn et al., 2006), higher social astuteness (Dietze & Knowles, 2020; Kraus et al., 2010), another important predictor of success (Ng et al., 2005; Todd et al., 2009), and higher performance on interdependent tasks (Dittmann et al., 2020), perhaps *the* key predictor of success in higher-level work (Eby et al., 2003).

I designed a scalable psychological intervention aimed at translating social advantages of workers with lower SES origins into positive workplace outcomes, and thus ultimately contributing to the attenuation of the class disadvantage in organizations. Reasons underlying social challenges faced by workers with lower SES origins in joining organizations are manifold, but my theoretical integration of different literatures on the topic suggests that many of them relate to how workers *think* about social situations, with workers from lower SES families having a comparatively less developed mental map of how to navigate new and unstructured social environments (Lareau, 2015), higher self-concerns

(e.g., inclusionary concerns, stereotype threat, social anxiety; Croizet & Claire, 1998; Jury et al., 2017; Spencer & Castano, 2007), and higher emotional reactivity (Gallo et al., 2005). Each of these can undercut a worker's success in joining and adjusting to new organizational environments (Chao et al., 1994; Lapointe et al., 2014; Nifadkar & Bauer, 2016; Saks, 1994). Thus, it might be possible to improve adjustment outcomes of workers with lower SES origins by simply influencing their psychology. I attempt to do so by developing, to the best of my knowledge, the first psychological intervention aimed at promoting organizational inclusiveness in organizational behavior research.

Psychological interventions consist of different strategies aimed at changing an individual's interpretative matrix, or ways of thinking about specific situations, and teaching the person to approach these situations in a way that has been shown to be effective but might be lacking in the given population. I leveraged research on psychological interventions, mostly conducted in social psychology and education research to develop an intervention aimed at attenuating challenges faced by workers with lower SES origins that I identified theoretically: Uncertainty in navigating new organizational environments, social self-concerns, and emotional reactivity (e.g., Gallo et al., 2005; Jury et al., 2017; Lareau, 2015; Spencer & Castano, 2007). The intervention consists of a main session and nine weekly reinforcement sessions, which can be entirely administered online (in my case, it was administered partly online), and, as such, it represents a potentially scalable and almost costless way to ensure better adjustment and career success of upwardly mobile workers. I situate the intervention where the problem starts—at the moment when highly educated workers, naturally varying in their socioeconomic origins, try to secure their first jobs and adjust to new organizations. I report a 3-month long longitudinal field experiment, including 1,177 data-points and real job offers as outcomes (among others).

Theory

Research on psychological influences of growing up in a lower (versus higher) SES environment highlights that such environments tend to be relatively materially constrained and entail a higher degree of unpredictability and risk (Stephens et al., 2014). Lower SES environments are defined through lower access to economic and social capital, lower power and status, and lower levels of personal choice and control (Lachman & Weaver, 1998). To adapt to these conditions, individuals growing up in lower SES communities are said to develop personal orientations and social norms that foster social connectivity and mutual support. Based on this logic, research has documented a series of social advantages that individuals who grow up in lower SES environments develop, and which might afford them advantages in the workplace. For example, Dittmann et al. (2020) proposed that the relatively more interdependent self-construal among workers from lower SES backgrounds affords them an advantage when working in teams. They found support for this idea across a series of studies among students, collegiate student-athletes, and online participants. These results stand in stark contrast with the documented class *dis*advantage *in organizations* (Laurison & Friedman, 2016; Pfeffer, 1977), particularly considering that effective teamwork and success in complex collaborative work is one of the key advantages one could enjoy in the modern economy (Eby et al., 2003). Clearly, some of the potential that workers with lower SES backgrounds enjoy prior to joining organizations remains unrealized in organizations.

Another consequence of growing up in a lower SES environment is that the emphasis on social connection and mutual support results in a stronger other-orientation and benevolence, which manifest beyond the original context one grew up in (Piff et al., 2010, 2012; Stellar et al., 2012; Stephens, Fryberg, et al., 2012). Benevolence is socially desirable and tends to garner acceptance and respect at work (Flynn et al., 2006). In fact, the stronger other-orientation among those with lower SES origins results not just in increased motivation

to interact with others and treat them kindly (Stephens et al., 2007; Stephens et al., 2011), but also makes such individuals more attentive to and effective at decoding others' internal states (Kraus et al., 2010; Stellar et al., 2012). In organizational settings, which are fundamentally *social*, the ability to understand others well has been highlighted as an essential tool in adjusting to and navigating the organizational social space, with strong positive influences on social capital development and ultimately career success (Todd et al., 2009). Ferris et al. (2005) suggest that the ability to "comprehend social interactions, and accurately interpret their behavior, as well as that of others, in social settings" (p. 129) represents a fundamental component of political skill, one of the key factors predicting career advancement, and particularly among workers who are already high in human capital and otherwise technical competence (Ng et al., 2005).

Despite these apparent social advantages, workers with lower SES origins seem to face challenges integrating into organizational social environments. As noted above, these problems manifest themselves both at the time of (attempted) organizational entry (Koppman, 2016; Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016), as well as beyond entry (Laurison & Friedman, 2016; Pfeffer, 1977). For example, Rivera (2012) studied selection in the context of elite professional services organizations, such as law firms, investment banks, and management consulting firms. She found that recruiters seemed aware that workers with lower class origins are as competent as other candidates but had negative impressions of their ability to fit in socially.

Fitting in socially seems to be a problem for workers with lower social class backgrounds even when they do manage to secure comparable employment. They seem to develop smaller and more constrained professional networks even when they have comparable education, occupation, and income (Smith et al., 2012), suggesting that even among workers in comparable positions, social class background shapes effectiveness in

developing social relations at work. They also *activate* narrower and more constrained parts of their networks for professional purposes (Smith et al., 2012), suggesting a (perceived) weaker access to the contacts they do have. Finally, workers with lower SES origins seem to also *benefit* less from contacts, including those that are key to career success, such as contacts to organizational incumbents who can provide mentorship (Dreher & Ash, 1990). As a result, workers with lower SES origins are at a long-term disadvantage in organizations (Laurison & Friedman, 2016), and, expectedly, particularly in those organizations in which social factors matter more for success (Laurison & Friedman, 2016; Pfeffer, 1977).

SES Origins and Challenges in the Newcomer Adjustment Process

Adjusting to a new organizational social environment tends to be challenging for most individuals, regardless of their class background (Bauer et al., 2007; Morrison, 2002). The experience has been described as a sense of "shock" to newcomers, as they are plunged in a new environment and need to rapidly learn about organizational routines, norms, and culture (Bauer et al., 2007; Morrison, 1993). Organizations, including their routines, norms, and culture, fundamentally consist of people, so familiarizing oneself with the organizational *social* landscape and trying to fit in socially is an essential part of the adjustment process (Katz, 1980). Newcomers benefit from being proactive, seeking out interaction opportunities, and trying to establish connections with other organizational members (Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Reichers, 1987). I outline below three related factors that I identified as best candidates for why newcomers with lower SES origins would have a disproportionately more difficult time navigating this complex environment than their more privileged colleagues, overshadowing the social potential such workers would otherwise have.

First, qualitative sociological research suggests that individuals with lower SES origins might have a comparatively less developed mental map for navigating new institutional environments, and in particular for developing and leveraging contacts within

the organization (e.g., Kraus et al., 2013; Lareau, 2015; Leana et al., 2012; Stephens et al., 2014). For example, in a long-term qualitative study, Lareau (2015) found that "middle-class young adults had more knowledge than their working-class or poor counterparts of the 'rules of the game' regarding how institutions worked" (p. 2). She noted that, when faced with institution-related problems, middle-class young adults often succeeded in getting their needs accommodated by the institutions, whereas working-class and poor young adults who had less knowledge about the institutions were more frustrated by bureaucracies. The lack of general skills of those from lower SES backgrounds in navigating new institutional environments is not surprising given their specific life course.

The gap in the general knowledge of navigating new institutions identified in this work is likely to be relevant in the challenging and unstructured environment of adjustment to new organizations. Newcomer adjustment research has shown that general occupational, industry, or preentry knowledge is positively associated with adjustment outcomes (Bauer & Green, 1994; Chao et al., 1994; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Saks & Ashforth, 2000) and that individuals typically seek such knowledge and information from those they are close to (Bauer et al., 2007; Morrison, 2002; Settoon & Adkins, 1997). Being less aware of the unstructured nature of the adjustment process, newcomers with lower SES origins might not realize importance of proactivity or seeking resources in a new work environment as suggested by Lareau's (2015) observations, and relatedly, they might also not acquire knowledge of whom to interact with, or what has been labeled in the newcomer adjustment literature as "knowing whom" and "knowing how" (Eby et al., 2003). Importantly, for the purpose of this research, this problem presents an opportunity because it may be possible to boost adjustment outcomes among workers with lower SES origins by providing a better cognitive map of the adjustment process and changing how they approach the challenge.

The second reason why workers with lower SES origins might face difficulties navigating new institutional environments is that novel social encounters that characterize such situations are likely to elicit social self-concerns, or concerns about *fitting in*. While concerns about fitting in are likely to be salient to some extent for all workers, they might be particularly stark for workers with lower SES origins because the new environment they are entering, dominated by middle- and upper-class individuals and norms, might be experienced as relatively more foreign and threatening. Research in educational psychology shows that lower SES individuals face concerns about belonging when they enter college, another social situation in which lower SES individuals are the minority (Jury et al., 2017). For instance, Stephens, Townsend, et al. (2012) theorized that college students with lower SES background experience a sense of misfit due to the endorsement of different values, which increases their discomfort, and eventually leading them to construe academic tasks as difficult. The experience of entering a new, middle-class workplace may be similar to the experience of entering college in that lower SES newcomers are more likely to feel like they "do not belong" (Harackiewicz et al., 2014; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Reay et al., 2009).

Relatedly, research in psychology shows that lower SES individuals are more likely to experience stereotype threat when their class background is made salient to them (Croizet & Claire, 1998). For instance, Spencer and Castano (2007) find that lower SES students performed significantly worse on a test and reported lower self-confidence when their socioeconomic identity was made salient than when it was not. Experiences of (low) SES stereotype threat and social anxiety are likely for upwardly mobile workers who work among those from more privileged backgrounds and regularly engage in cross-class interactions (Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013). Sense of fit is an important goal of the socialization process in itself, and studies on organizational socialization also show that a sense of fitting in socially and of social support are important for key downstream newcomer adjustment outcomes,

including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and intentions to quit (Kim et al., 2005; Saks et al., 2007).

The third and related psychological barrier my review identified is that individuals with lower SES origins tend to be relatively more *emotionally reactive* (Gallo et al., 2005). A large meta-analysis (Ayoub et al., 2018) found that, controlling for respondents' education and current social class, being brought up in a lower SES family was negatively associated with emotional stability (i.e., higher levels of neuroticism). This fact is likely to create different problems in the adjustment process. First, emotional stability is important in its own right for navigating new and stressful contexts such as that of adjustment to a new workplace (Huang et al., 2014; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2009), as indicated by its positive associations with stress tolerance (Liu et al., 2009) and adjustment success (Ali et al., 2003; Brooks & DuBois, 1995). Second, higher emotional reactivity may exacerbate the specific problems that might disproportionally affect those with lower SES origins outline above, whether it is a lack of cognitive map for navigating new environments, or concerns about fitting in.

In sum, I identified three sets of issues that different literatures point to as potential barriers to success in adjusting to new organizations for workers with lower SES origins. In the following section, I outline an endeavor to positively influence newcomers' psychology before the beginning of the adjustment process.

Reversing the Class Disadvantage by Changing the Mind

Psychological interventions consist of different strategies aimed at changing an individual's interpretative matrix and teaching the person to approach the relevant situations in a way that has been shown to be effective but might be lacking in the given population. I leveraged research on psychological interventions to alter specific ways people give meaning to and make sense of themselves or social situations during the newcomer adjustment process. Given that changes in meanings can be recursive and self-sustaining. I also attempt

to teach and motivate individuals to think and act in ways that become positively self-fulfilling in a new work environment. Given that my review identified a set of related and potentially mutually reinforcing issues that may be responsible for the problem, I do not attempt to isolate specific underlying processes or impact them separately, but instead create an intervention that jointly targets these challenges to maximize its effectiveness.

Main Intervention

For the initial main intervention session, I draw on previous work in the psychological intervention literature indicating that verbal persuasion and role modeling (i.e., social influence) are among the most effective ways of impacting mindsets and changing behavior (e.g., McNatt & Judge, 2008; Yeager et al., 2016). I used three real-life stories to create a video that educates individuals about the adjustment process, with the content being based closely on my review of identified challenges, explaining effective ways of coping with new uncertain environments, social self-concerns, and coping with emotional reactivity. The video never mentioned SES background or disadvantage of any sort, as this was important to eliminate the risk of demand effects.

I recruited three senior (final year) university students who have already completed their internships to share their experiences with me, and then tailored their experiences to create scripts for the intervention video. The video was also designed with considerations of attention and scalability in mind, so I undertook multiple pretests and iterations to ensure effective delivery of the content, and ultimately organized the content in a relatively short video (7 minutes). I recruited three actors of the same profile as the applicant pool, who were blind to my hypotheses, to appear in the video as senior students. By sharing the experiences of three senior students, my aim is to educate participants that while it is important to network and socialize with colleagues, it is also important to manage their own expectations

and social anxiety when others at work do not reciprocate immediately or when they still feel like they do not belong.

Intervention Reinforcements

In addition to the main intervention, I implemented weekly reinforcement sessions to maximize chances of the intervention having a positive impact, particularly given the ambitiously short duration of the initial session. The reinforcement sessions were similarly designed to be brief (5 minutes on average) to make the final intervention package practical to implement. I used two different types of exercises in the weekly reinforcements to reinforce different aspects of the intervention: Goal setting and letter writing.

Post Intervention Adjustment Outcomes

Given the focus of the theory and intervention on enabling newcomers with lower SES origins to overcome social challenges integrating in new firms, I examine *social integration*, or a sense of being accepted and liked by peers (Bauer et al., 2007), as one of the focal outcomes. This is also in line with the newcomer literature that has identified social integration as one of the key adjustment outcomes (Bauer et al., 2007). Furthermore, I examine work engagement, or the simultaneous investment of cognitive, affective, and physical energies into role performance (Rich et al., 2010), as the second outcome, because overcoming the identified challenges (e.g., feeling less anxious) can serve to increase one's energy investment into work performance, which is also an important predictor of career success (Ng et al., 2005; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Xie et al., 2016) and thus relevant to whether my intervention may address the class achievement problems discussed earlier. The examination of social integration and work engagement was also meant to map onto the broad dichotomy of social- versus task-related outcomes to provide a balanced picture of the adjustment process (Bauer et al., 2007; Morrison, 1993).

Because I tracked participants over the course of their adjustment period and administered weekly reinforcement sessions, I expect to observe such interactive effect of the intervention and participant SES origins on newcomers' social integration and engagement at work over time. Past interventions focused mostly on a single outcome point (e.g., final-year GPA), and tested the effectiveness of their interventions targeted at a certain group (e.g., minority students) by examining whether the intervention had a stronger effect among participants belonging to that social group. Since I examine the adjustment process over time, I test whether the intervention has the strongest effect on adjustment trajectories among participants with lower SES origins. Finally, I examine whether the expected positive consequences of the intervention (social integration and engagement) ultimately translate into a higher likelihood of job offer. Together, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1a (b): *The intervention sets workers with lower SES origins on a more positive trajectory over the adjustment process between weeks 1 and 9, in terms of social integration (engagement).*

Hypothesis 2: *Positive adjustment outcomes (social integration and engagement) elicited by the intervention (as described in H1a and 1b) increase the likelihood of job offer.*

Overview of Research

The ideal sample within which to test the intervention is a sample of newcomers who are transitioning from higher education to their first jobs. Ideally, they should have comparable educational qualifications, in line with the focus on workers who attain comparable levels of competence but may face challenges when transitioning to work. Guided by these considerations, I identified a controlled sample of business school students just before their key transition point of adjusting to new organizations through an internship-like process, and attempting to obtain job offers. I was able to work with participants to

prepare them for the experience, closely track them throughout the first three months of adjustment, and finally record who received permanent employment offers.

Method

Participants and Design

I started with a pre-intervention survey among 430 business school students (M_{age} = 22.07, SD_{age} = 1.58, 194 male) in Singapore, in which I collected demographics, GPA, and information about participants' upcoming internships. All participants indicated interest to participate in the intervention study that would involve a series of data collections over the course of three months.

I used information obtained in the pre-intervention survey to further conduct a stratified random sampling for the intervention study, a procedure which ensured good distribution of the SES origins variable in the overall sample, as well as blocking (e.g., equalization) of conditions along the focal SES origins variable as well as key control variables. This procedure (implemented using a computer algorithm; Kennedy & Mann, 2015) reduces noise (e.g., due to differences in gender distribution between conditions) and increases control and power, as compared to standard random assignment (Morgan & Rubin, 2012). Given the involved nature of the data collection (producing many level-1 observations), I set the participant-level target sample size at a minimum of 100, in line with past longitudinal studies with a comparable number of waves (e.g., Gross et al., 2011; Song et al., 2008). I managed to sign up 107 participants (M_{age} = 22.01, SD_{age} = 1.52, 40 male) to fully participate in all study components, including pre-intervention survey, the laboratory session, and nine online surveys, resulting in a total of 1,177 data points.

All participants underwent an initial session at the computer laboratory (administering the intervention or control content), followed by nine weekly online data collections (involving intervention reinforcements or control exercises, depending on the condition). All

participants completed the main session before the start of their internships. The first weekly surveys were sent out to the participants after they completed the first week of their internships based on a pre-recorded start date. This was repeated for the remaining weeks, and a final survey was sent to them a week after they completed their internship.

Procedure and Materials

Pre-Intervention Survey

The focal construct of SES origins was measured using a validated scale widely-used in medicine, psychology, and organizational behavior (Adler et al., 2000; Kraus & Keltner, 2009; Kraus et al., 2013), consisting of a drawing of a ladder which participants use to rate their childhood background on a 10-point scale (1 = *people who are worst off in Singapore society—who have the least money* to 10 = *people who are best off in Singapore society—who have the most money*). To isolate and thus conservatively estimate the effect of SES origins, I used the same scale to separately measure participants *current* SES, and, as an additional direct proxy of student's own current earnings as well as academic performance, whether they are receiving a scholarship (no financial support = 0, scholarship = 1, bursary = 2)[7]. To further control for any differences in qualifications prior to the joining the organizations, I measured GPA and gender (female = 0 and male = 1).

Intervention Condition

The main intervention session aimed to alter specific ways participants think about social situations at work, and how they can manage challenges via the verbal persuasion and role modeling tactics communicated via the video, as detailed above. I also included a summary of the takeaways that the three senior students shared with the participants. At the end of the session, participants recalled and summarized each takeaway and wrote them

[7] In the local context, scholarships are awarded to undergraduates on a basis of merit (e.g., GPA), whereas bursaries are awarded to undergraduates on a basis of financial needs as well as merit. Both scholarships and bursaries provide stipends to undergraduates. These factors may thus help account for current situation (both financial ability and academic capabilities) and thus conservatively estimate the effect of SES *origins*.

down on a piece of paper, which they were asked to keep for the length of the study. The weekly reinforcement sessions were administered online. By tapping on the goal setting and letter writing strategies, the weekly reinforcement sessions aimed to remind students of the intervention content and the changes in meanings they would have given to social situations at work, and also to reflect on the different work challenges they would have overcome in each week. I staggered the weekly reinforcement exercises in cycles of three.

Control Condition

Participants in the control condition also completed an initial session at the computer lab and weekly exercises. I aimed to expose participants in the control condition to content similar to that in the intervention condition, most notably having peers talk about internship success, but without the key intervention feature of educating the participant to approach future challenges differently. For the initial session at the laboratory, I created another video for participants in the control condition. They viewed videos of three candidates (paralleling the three senior students who shared their experiences in the intervention condition), who discussed their strengths and why they were good candidates for similar internship positions, akin to a job pitch (e.g., discussing their fit with the organization, how much of a team player they are, and their work ethic). The three candidates were the same three actors I used in the intervention condition. The weekly exercises in the control condition were borrowed from the mindfulness literature (e.g., Hafenbrack et al., 2014), and asked participants to reflect not on challenges or set goals (as in the intervention condition), but to write about whatever is on their mind. This was meant to control for self-reflection more broadly (Mason et al., 2007) and also kept the format of the weekly exercises comparable.

Weekly Surveys

All participants completed survey measures after undergoing the reinforcement exercises. I assessed *social integration* weekly with seven items adapted from Morrison

(1993) (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5). The reliability coefficients for the weekly social integration measure fall into this range, α = 0.78 to 0.90. Sample items are "I feel accepted by my coworkers" and "I feel comfortable around my coworkers". I measured *engagement* biweekly with eighteen items adapted from Rich et al. (2010) (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5). The reliability coefficients for the biweekly engagement measure fall into this range, α = 0.92 to 0.97. Sample items are "I work with intensity on my job", "I am interested in my job", and "At work, I concentrate on my job".

Results

I tested the relationships between SES origins, the intervention, and time, on the one hand, and social integration and engagement outcomes on the other, using multi-level modeling with cases nested within individual because there were nine data points for each participant. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations for all study variables. Table 2 contains results of regression analyses.

SES Origins, Intervention, and Time predict Social Integration

Students with lower SES origins in the intervention condition experienced a more positive trajectory of social integration between first and final week of their internships, compared to similar students in the control condition, b = 0.05, SE = 0.02, p = .004, as well as compared to students with higher SES origins in the intervention condition, b = –0.05, SE = 0.02, p = .012. The associated three-way interaction among intervention, SES origins, and time in predicting social integration was significant, b = –0.01, SE = 0.01, p = .023. Figures 1 and 2 plot outcome trajectories in each condition. Figure 1 shows that participants with lower SES origins in the intervention condition began their internships with lower social integration scores, but this continuously improved over the weeks, b = 0.65, SE = 0.01, p < .001, and at the end of the intervention, these participants started to demonstrate comparable social integration compared to those with higher SES origins who did not demonstrate any

improvement across time, $b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .12$. Figure 2 shows that, while all participants in the control condition experienced a slight increase in social integration over time, participants with higher SES origins, $b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .008$, appear to consistently score better on social integration than those with lower SES origins, $b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .07$, across time. Thus, the intervention was effective at improving social integration of lower SES students, supporting Hypothesis 1a.

SES Origins, Intervention, and Time predict Engagement

Similarly, students with lower SES origins in the intervention condition experienced a more positive trajectory of engagement between first and final week of their internships, compared to students with lower SES origins in the control condition, $b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .003$, as well as compared to students with higher SES origins in the intervention condition, $b = –0.07$, $SE = 0.03$, $p = .018$. The associated three-way interaction among intervention, SES origins, and time in predicting engagement was significant, $b = –0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .005$. Figures 3 and 4 plot outcome trajectories in each condition. Figure 3 shows that participants with lower SES origins in the intervention condition began their internships with lower engagement scores, but this continuously improved over the weeks, $b = 0.04$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .014$. In contrast, participants with higher SES origins demonstrated a somewhat negative trajectory in terms of engagement during their internships, $b = –0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .12$. Figure 4 shows that participants with lower SES origins in the control condition demonstrated an overall negative trajectory in terms of engagement during their internships, $b = –0.02$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .10$, whereas, participants with higher SES origins in the same condition demonstrated an overall slightly positive trajectory during their internships, $b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .40$. Thus, the intervention was effective at improving engagement of lower SES students, supporting Hypothesis 1b.

Adjustment Outcomes predict Job Offer

In the final survey sent to participants one week after the completion of their internships, I asked participants whether they had a job offer from the organization (no = 0, yes = 1, still waiting = 2). I analyzed data from participants who obtained a response (n = 92). As such, job offer is a binary dependent variable and I employed probit regression clustered within participants to test Hypothesis 2. Results revealed that social integration had a significant positive main effect on job offer, $b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.20$, $p = .031$. However, engagement did not have a significant effect on job offer, $b = 0.27$, $SE = 0.21$, $p = .19$. The finding, which partially supports Hypothesis 2, is consistent with the newcomer literature that finds that fitting in with other organizational actors may be more important than task-related factors for initial success of newcomers (Katz, 1980).

Discussion

Motivated by evidence that upwardly mobile individuals face challenges integrating into new organizational environments, and parallel evidence that such workers have (clearly unrealized) potential in the social domain, I created a psychological intervention aimed at changing how such workers think about the newcomer adjustment process. I find that the trajectories of both social- and work-related adjustment outcomes for individuals with lower SES origins improved over the course of their adjustment process, providing an otherwise disadvantaged group with an *advantage*.

Theoretical Implications

My research contributes to the nascent body of micro-organizational research aimed at addressing the class ceiling problem by focusing on supply-side processes and solutions. As detailed earlier, most research focusing on class issues in the domain of work emphasized demand-side processes, such as discrimination and otherwise constrained opportunities for those with lower SES origins (Koppman, 2016; Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016).

However, this body of work has remained largely disconnected from research in psychology highlighting various supply-side psychological differences as a function of SES background (Stephens et al., 2014). The identified psychological differences as a function of SES origins have further remained disconnected from newcomer research showing that these psychological factors matter for workplace success (Bauer et al., 2007; Morrison, 2002). By connecting these literatures, I provide a more comprehensive conceptualization of issues faced by workers with lower SES origins, affirming the fundamentally social nature of such issues and highlighting the relevance of supply-side factors that also play an important role.

These insights may motivate further attention to supply-side processes contributing to class challenges in organizations. Given prior evidence, I focused on social issues experienced by workers with lower SES origins, but results suggest that task-related issues might play a role in class barriers as well. Most notably, targeting social issues helped promote task-related engagement in this sample, suggesting that class-related social challenges matter for task engagement and related outcomes down the line. Past research suggested that workers with lower SES origins indeed attain the same or even higher levels of ability and performance (Dittmann et al., 2020; Martin et al., 2016), naturally turning attention to performance-unrelated factors such as fit in cultural taste (e.g., Koppman, 2016; Rivera, 2012). However, these past studies focused primarily on the initial stages of the work relationship, most notably the process of obtaining the job (Jackson 2009; Koppman, 2016; Pager et al., 2009; Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). Although workers with lower SES origins may enter organizations equally or more capable than their more advantaged peers, work ability is further shaped in organizations, and my results suggest that gaps in human capital, not just social capital, might emerge and play a role in the class achievement gap. Thus, more longitudinal investigations are needed to enrich past models largely focused on demand-side social factors.

My psychological intervention also opens up avenues for future work to develop and apply supply-side solutions to promote inclusion. There may be other supply-side psychological differences among employees with different class origins that may lead to separate inclusion-related issues in the workplace. For instance, individuals with lower SES origins might face challenges in terms of emotion management that may undermine their wellbeing and performance at work. Given the importance of emotion management in the workplace (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; O'Boyle Jr. et al., 2011), future interventions may address additional class challenges by building this additional aspect of employee psychological capital.

Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations of the current work, and the associated avenues for future research are important to highlight. First, concerning the sample, I was able to study the key career transition to a first internship and potential first offer for a permanent position, arguably the most relevant context given my theoretical focus, which allowed me to gain a deep insight into the adjustment process and a clean test of the effect of SES origins. These advantages come with tradeoffs, most notably in the form of the test being confined to a single country and to a limited range of job types. Future research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of the intervention in other contexts.

My intervention centers around a few strategies: Verbal persuasion and role modeling in the main intervention, and goal setting and letter writing in the weekly reinforcements. Some of these exercises (e.g., goal setting and role modeling) have been examined separately by organizational behavior researchers in attempts to increase motivation and performance (e.g., Latham & Locke, 1991; Locke et al., 1981) or employees' self-efficacy at work (e.g., McNatt & Judge, 2008). The intervention leverages a combination of novel (e.g., letter writing) and aforementioned common strategies with the goal of maximizing its efficacy.

There are, of course, other strategies that have been discussed in the literature and that might be useful (e.g., growth mindset intervention in Yeager et al., 2011), and future research is needed to examine which combination of strategies are most feasible and efficacious in terms of promoting inclusion.

Another future research direction is to consider other potential supply-side issues that might contribute to the class challenges at work and devise corresponding intervention or intervention components. As an illustration, one set of findings highlights that individuals with lower SES origins tend to have lower internal locus of control and are less proactive, channelizing their energies instead into resilience and perseverance (Snibbe & Markus 2005; Stephens et al., 2007). Lower proactivity and initiative among such workers have been suggested as another source of class issues at work (Lareau, 2015). Fortunately, it may be relatively easy to educate workers on being proactive through interventions. A more general proactivity intervention might produce benefits for a broader range of employee outcomes.

Practical Implications and Conclusion

The primary implication of my intervention study is that the adjustment outcomes of newcomers with lower SES origins can be improved via a simple and virtually costless psychological intervention that leverages their social potential. By improving adjustment outcomes, the intervention can be useful to workers, and, perhaps less obviously, employers. Organizations should be able to incorporate relatively easily this or a similar inclusion-oriented psychological intervention as part of their existing onboarding programs.

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Chapter 1 (Tables and Figures)

Table 1

Study 1 Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Importance of creativity to self	4.56	1.19	-					
2	SES origins	2.93	0.98	0.08	-				
3	Gender	0.45	0.50	0.03	0.02	-			
4	Education	5.42	1.84	-0.02	0.27	0.08	-		
5	Age	20.20	2.08	-0.02	-0.01	-0.03	0.14	-	
6	Country	433.98	264.80	0.14	-0.12	-0.02	-0.07	0.08	-

Note. N = 981. Correlation coefficients above the value of |.02| are significant at $p < .05$.

Table 2

Study 2 Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Artistic ONET score	2.09	1.11	-					
2	SES origins	3.11	0.91	0.11	-				
3	Current SES	3.10	0.84	-0.02	0.62	-			
4	GPA	3.35	0.38	-0.02	-0.08	0.05	-		
5	Gender	0.41	0.49	-0.04	-0.07	0.05	0.35	-	
6	Faculty	2.34	1.26	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.07	-0.04	-

Note. N = 300. Correlation coefficients above the value of |.12| are significant at $p < .05$.

Table 3

Study 3a Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Job choice	0.50	0.50	-				
2	SES origins	2.83	1.16	0.17	-			
3	Current SES	3.38	0.93	0.00	0.28	-		
4	GPA	0.30	0.46	0.04	0.20	0.19	-	
5	Age	34.10	4.04	-0.01	-0.03	0.03	0.10	-

Note. N = 150. Correlation coefficients above the value of |.16| are significant at $p < .05$.

Table 4

Study 3b Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Job choice	0.68	0.47	-								
2	Importance of creativity to self	3.18	0.99	0.35	-							
3	Artistic ONET score	2.94	0.8	0.34	0.39	-						
4	Importance of creative job requirements	2.94	1.04	0.39	0.77	0.43	-					
5	Desirability of creative work	3.25	0.85	0.35	0.72	0.39	0.85	-				
6	SES origins	3.23	1.03	0.16	0.03	0.09	0.16	0.18	-			
7	Current SES	2.92	0.87	-0.06	-0.01	-0.13	0.07	0.12	0.57	-		
8	GPA	0.35	0.48	-0.02	0.10	0.01	0.08	0.11	-0.01	0.05	-	
9	Age	22.17	0.82	0.05	0.09	-0.04	0.04	0.01	0.04	-0.02	0.07	-

Note. N = 137. Correlation coefficients above the value of |.18| are significant at $p < .05$.

Table 5

Study 4 Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Job choice	0.53	0.50	-						
2	Importance of creativity to self	4.11	1.35	-0.60	-					
3	Artistic ONET score	4.13	0.94	-0.40	0.56	-				
4	Importance of creative job requirements	5.84	1.65	0.16	-0.12	-0.12	-			
5	Desirability of creative work	6.21	1.37	0.11	-0.07	-0.09	0.30	-		
6	SES origins	21.33	1.55	-0.05	0.07	0.13	-0.13	-0.07	-	
7	Current SES	1.83	0.89	0.18	-0.20	-0.14	0.05	0.09	0.04	-

Note. N = 390. Correlation coefficients above the value of |.10| are significant at $p < .05$.

Chapter 2 (Tables and Figures)

Table 1

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Model	Factors	χ^2	*df*	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Newcomer									
Model 1	4-factor: SA, TA, NB, NM	1126.90	344	-	-	.94	.94	.04	.03
Model 2	3-factor: SA + TA, NB, NM	4230.64	347	3103.74*	3	.72	.69	.10	.08
Model 3	2-factor: SA + TA, NB + NM	4663.86	349	3536.96*	5	.73	.71	.09	.08
Model 4	1-factor: SA + TA + NB + NM	5906.66	350	4779.76*	6	.59	.56	.11	.10
Supervisor									
Model 1	3-factor: P, TO, LIKE	163.81	62	-	-	.98	.97	.03	.03
Model 2	2-factor: P + TO, LIKE	180.97	64	17.16*	2	.98	.97	.03	.03
Model 3	1-factor: P + TO + LIKE	1850.17	65	1686.36*	3	.63	.56	.12	.13

Note. N= 531 newcomers, 113 supervisors; * $p < .05$. SA = social anxiety; TA = task anxiety; NB = network building; NM = network maintaining; P = promotability; TO = training opportunities; LIKE = supervisor liking of newcomer; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

Table 2

Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Education (N) (T1)	4.1	0.30	-								
2	Level in Organization (N) (T1)	1.14	0.46	.05	-							
3	Age (N) (T1)	23.90	2.09	.16	.28	-						
4	Gender (N) (T1)	0.75	0.47	.03	.26	.06	-					
5	Annual Personal Income in INR (N) (T1)	282581.31	54229.03	.01	.09	-.11	.12	-				
6	SES Origins Proxy 1 (N) (T1)	4.46	1.12	-.18	.09	-.05	.02	-.17	-			
7	SES Origins Proxy 2 (N) (T1)	2.75	0.59	-.14	.03	-.10	.04	-.16	.66	-		
8	Integrated SES origins proxy (N) (T1)	4.97	1.05	-.17	.06	-.08	.03	-.18	.91	.92	-	
9	Social Anxiety (N)	1.99	0.60	.01	.11	.00	.05	.21	-.24	-.21	-.24	-
10	Task Anxiety (N)	2.07	0.50	.03	-.02	.01	-.07	-.18	.00	.04	.02	.01
11	Social Capital Development Behaviors (N)	3.70	0.55	-.19	-.06	-.34	.04	.13	.35	.33	.37	-.61
12	Liking (S)	3.91	0.64	-.08	.02	-.20	-.04	.25	-.04	-.04	-.04	.05
13	Promotability (S) (T4)	2.88	0.91	-.06	-.02	-.03	-.07	.00	.08	.11	.10	.00
14	Training Opportunities (S) (T4)	2.88	0.95	-.04	-.03	-.04	-.08	.00	.09	.11	.11	-.01
15	SES Origins Proxy 1 (S) (T1)	4.69	1.05	-.20	.07	-.10	.00	-.17	.40	.27	.37	-.23
16	SES Origins Proxy 2 (S) (T1)	2.96	0.55	-.16	.00	-.15	.07	-.05	.20	.28	.27	-.16
17	Integrated SES origins proxy (S) (T1)	5.30	0.97	-.20	.03	-.14	.04	-.12	.33	.30	.35	-.21

		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10	Task Anxiety (N)	-							
11	Social Capital Development Behaviors (N)	-.01	-						
12	Liking (S)	-.08	.18	-					
13	Promotability (S) (T4)	.01	.13	.30	-				
14	Training Opportunities (S) (T4)	-.05	.12	.20	.65	-			
15	SES Origins Proxy 1 (S) (T1)	-.06	.25	-.07	.08	.08	-		
16	SES Origins Proxy 2 (S) (T1)	-.08	.24	-.03	.06	.06	.65	-	
17	Integrated SES origins proxy (S) (T1)	-.08	.26	-.05	.08	.08	.90	.91	-

Note. N = 531 newcomers, 113 supervisors. Correlation coefficients above the value of |.08| are significant at $p < .05$. Social anxiety, task anxiety, social capital development behaviors, and liking were aggregated across three time waves. (S) = supervisor rated, (N) = newcomer rated. Annual income was recorded in Indian Rupees. The Purchasing Power Parity ratio for India versus United States is 21.28 in 2019 (OECD, 2021), hence making the average annual salary for a fresh college graduate equivalent to 13,279.20 USD in 2019. An integrated SES origins score was computed by standardizing each SES origins proxy and then taking their average.

Table 3

HLM Results (Social Capital Development Behaviors T2–T4)

	Social Capital Development Behaviors															
	Time 2				Time 3				Time 4				Aggregated			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Controls																
Education (N)	-0.01	(0.07)	-0.02	(0.06)	0.11†	(0.06)	0.05	(0.06)	-0.04	(0.07)	-0.10	(0.06)	0.05	(0.05)	-0.00	(0.04)
Level in Organization (N)	0.10	(0.14)	0.06	(0.11)	0.07	(0.11)	0.11	(0.10)	-0.08	(0.12)	-0.00	(0.11)	0.03	(0.09)	0.07	(0.08)
Age (N)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.02	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.02†	(0.01)	-0.02	(0.01)	-0.03*	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)
Gender (N)	-0.03	(0.04)	-0.01	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)	0.01	(0.03)	0.07†	(0.04)	0.09*	(0.04)	0.01	(0.03)	0.02	(0.02)
Annual Personal Income (N)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00†	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00†	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)
Main Variable																
SES Origins (N)	0.07*	(0.02)	0.05*	(0.02)	0.05*	(0.02)	0.04*	(0.02)	0.06*	(0.02)	0.07*	(0.02)	0.04*	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.01)
Social Anxiety (N)	-	-	-0.44*	(0.03)	-	-	-0.27*	(0.03)	-	-	-0.21*	(0.02)	-	-	-0.36*	(0.02)
Task Anxiety (N)	-	-	-0.02	(0.04)	-	-	0.05†	(0.02)	-	-	0.02	(0.02)	-	-	-0.00	(0.02)
Constant	3.52*	(0.47)	4.52*	(0.40)	2.98*	(0.40)	3.62*	(0.38)	3.77*	(0.44)	4.34*	(0.42)	3.19*	(0.32)	4.07*	(0.27)
R^2	0.06		0.41		0.09		0.30		0.12		0.33		0.05		0.41	
ΔR^2			0.35				0.21				0.21				0.36	

Note. N = 531 newcomers. HLM = hierarchical linear modeling. (N) = newcomer rated. Level-1 pseudo R2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula. * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$. We included the corresponding social anxiety and task anxiety scores at each time wave for analyses.

Table 4

HLM Results (Social Anxiety T2–T4)

	Social Anxiety							
	Time 2		Time 3		Time 4		Aggregated	
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Controls								
Education (N)	-0.00	(0.09)	-0.12	(0.09)	-0.15	(0.12)	-0.11	(0.08)
Level in Organization (N)	0.01	(0.16)	0.25†	(0.14)	0.27	(0.18)	0.17	(0.14)
Age (N)	-0.01	(0.02)	-0.00	(0.01)	0.01	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.01)
Gender (N)	0.04	(0.05)	0.05	(0.05)	0.03	(0.07)	0.04	(0.05)
Annual Personal Income (N)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)
Main Variable								
SES Origins (N)	-0.07*	(0.03)	-0.07*	(0.03)	-0.04	(0.03)	-0.05*	(0.02)
Constant	1.89*	(0.58)	2.18*	(0.56)	2.00*	(0.74)	2.12*	(0.52)
R^2	0.14		0.05		0.04		0.09	

Note. N = 531 newcomers. HLM = hierarchical linear modeling. (N) = newcomer rated. Level-1 pseudo R2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula. * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$.

Table 5

HLM Results for Class Ceiling Evidence

	Promotability				Training Opportunities			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Controls								
Education (N)	-0.13	(0.14)	-0.11	(0.14)	-0.04	(0.15)	-0.03	(0.15)
Level in Organization (N)	-0.04	(0.17)	-0.04	(0.17)	-0.04	(0.17)	-0.05	(0.18)
Age (N)	-0.00	(0.02)	0.01	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.02)	-0.00	(0.02)
Gender (N)	-0.13	(0.09)	-0.14	(0.09)	-0.18†	(0.09)	-0.18*	(0.09)
Annual Personal Income (N)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
Main Variable								
SES Origins (N) (A)	0.08*	(0.04)	0.27†	(0.16)	0.10*	(0.04)	0.23	(0.17)
SES Origins (S) (B)	-	-	0.22	(0.14)	-	-	0.18	(0.15)
A x B	-	-	-0.04	(0.03)	-	-	-0.03	(0.03)
Constant	3.03*	(0.83)	1.66	(1.22)	2.81*	(0.86)	1.69	(1.27)
R^2	0.02		0.02		0.02		0.02	

Note. N = 531 newcomers, 113 supervisors. HLM = hierarchical linear modeling. (S) = supervisor rated, (N) = newcomer rated. Level-1 pseudo R2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula. * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$.

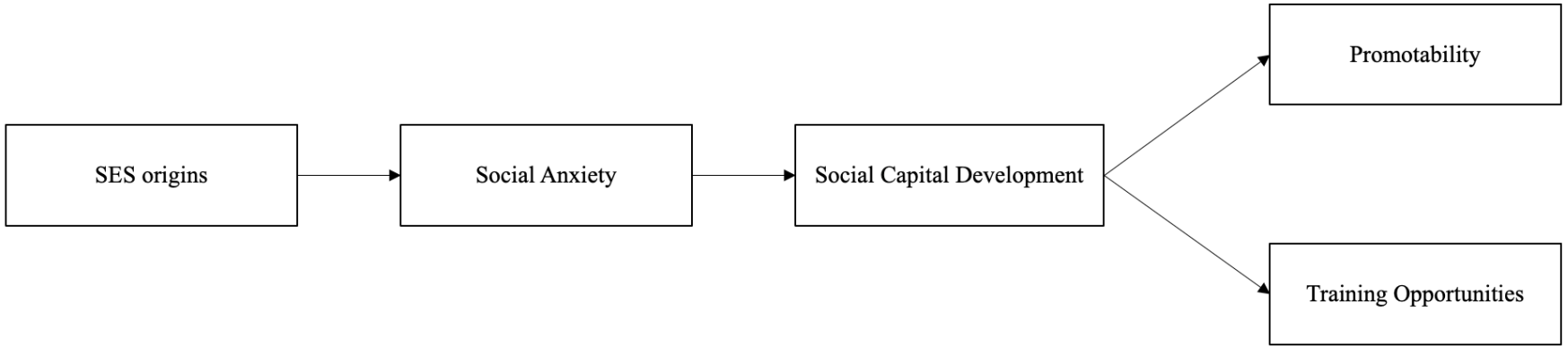
Table 6

HLM Results (Liking of Newcomer T2–T4)

	Liking of Newcomer															
	Time 2				Time 3				Time 4				Aggregated			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Controls																
Education (N)	-0.07	(0.12)	-0.08	(0.12)	-0.18	(0.11)	-0.20†	(0.11)	-0.11	(0.11)	-0.15	(0.11)	-0.12	(0.09)	-0.14	(0.09)
Level in Organization (N)	0.10	(0.14)	0.11	(0.14)	0.09	(0.13)	0.11	(0.13)	0.24†	(0.13)	0.27*	(0.13)	0.15	(0.11)	0.16	(0.11)
Age (N)	-0.03	(0.02)	-0.03	(0.02)	-0.06*	(0.02)	-0.06*	(0.02)	-0.08*	(0.02)	-0.08*	(0.02)	-0.05*	(0.01)	-0.05*	(0.01)
Gender (N)	-0.14†	(0.07)	-0.14†	(0.07)	-0.10	(0.07)	-0.10	(0.07)	-0.07	(0.07)	-0.07	(0.07)	-0.10†	(0.06)	-0.10	(0.06)
Annual Personal Income (N)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)
Main Variable																
SES Origins (N) (A)	-0.08*	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.14)	-0.01	(0.03)	0.07	(0.12)	0.03	(0.03)	0.08	(0.12)	-0.02	(0.03)	0.05	(0.11)
SES Origins (S) (B)	-	-	0.04	(0.12)	-	-	0.02	(0.11)	-	-	-0.04	(0.11)	-	-	0.00	(0.10)
A x B	-	-	-0.01	(0.02)	-	-	-0.01	(0.02)	-	-	-0.01	(0.02)	-	-	-0.01	(0.02)
Constant	4.89*	(0.70)	4.66*	(1.03)	5.01*	(0.65)	4.97*	(0.95)	4.87*	(0.64)	5.26*	(0.94)	4.93*	(0.55)	4.97*	(0.81)
R^2	0.03		0.03		0.11		0.11		0.13		0.14		0.10		0.11	
ΔR^2			0.00				0.00				0.01				0.01	

Note. N = 531 newcomers, 113 supervisors. HLM = hierarchical linear modeling. (S) = supervisor rated, (N) = newcomer rated. Level-1 pseudo R2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula. * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$.

Figure 1



Note. Conceptual Model

Chapter 3 (Tables and Figures)

Table 1

Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

	Variables	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Social integration	3.57	0.67	–									
2	Engagement	3.86	0.60	0.52	–								
3	Job Offer	0.68	0.71	0.11	0.10	–							
4	Condition (0 = control, 1 = intervention)	0.59	0.49	0.06	0.04	0.22	–						
5	Time	5	2.58	0.13	0.00	0.00	-0.00	–					
6	SES origins	5.60	1.65	0.07	0.09	-0.05	0.10	0.00	–				
7	Current SES	5.89	1.64	0.04	0.02	-0.05	0.12	0.00	0.55	–			
8	GPA	3.28	0.37	0.09	0.00	0.32	0.05	-0.00	-0.02	-0.04	–		
9	Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.37	0.48	0.02	-0.01	0.10	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.28	0.29	–	
10	Financial support	1.01	0.90	0.11	0.09	-0.07	-0.16	0.00	-0.14	-0.34	-0.00	-0.05	–

Note. N = 107. Correlation coefficients above the value of |.06| are significant at $p < .05$. Financial support was rated on this scale: 0 = *No support*, 1 = *Scholarship*, 2 = *Bursary*.

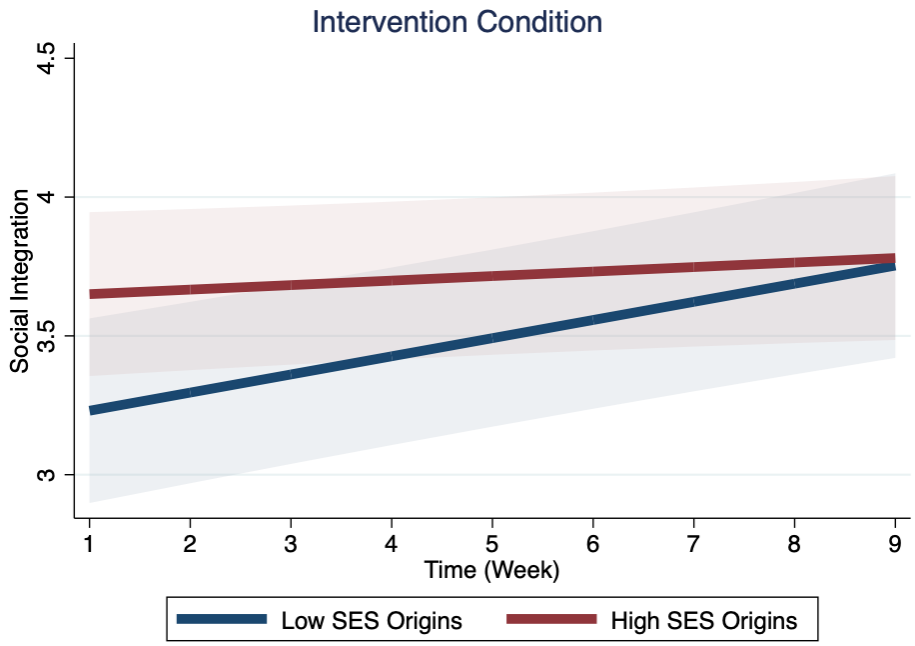
Table 2

Multi-level Regression Results

	Adjustment Outcome			
Variables	**Social Integration**	**Engagement**	**Job offer**	
Condition (1 = intervention)	-0.53(0.42)	-0.97(0.42)*	1.52(1.05)	1.42(1.07)
SES origins	-0.01(0.05)	-0.03(0.05)	0.02(0.12)	0.01(0.13)
Time	0.01(0.02)	-0.05(0.03)	-0.01(0.01)	0.01(0.02)
Condition x SES origins	0.10(0.07)	0.17(0.07)*	-0.13(0.18)	-0.12(0.18)
Condition x Time	0.08(0.03)*	0.13(0.04)*	-0.05(0.03)	-0.04(0.03)
SES origins x Time	0.00(0.00)	0.01(0.00)	-0.00(0.00)	-0.00(0.00)
Condition x SES origins x Time	-0.01(0.01)*	-0.02(0.01)*	0.01(0.00)	0.01(0.01)
Adjustment outcomes				
Social Integration	-	-	0.43(0.20)*	-
Engagement	-	-	-	0.27(0.21)
Controls				
Current SES	0.03(0.04)	0.00(0.04)	-0.09(0.12)	-0.07(0.11)
GPA	0.18(0.16)	0.01(0.13)	1.38(0.39)*	1.42(0.40)*
Gender (1 = male)	-0.03(0.13)	-0.15(0.11)	-0.07(0.33)	-0.10(0.33)
Financial support	0.11(0.07)	0.08(0.06)	0.20(0.17)	0.23(0.17)

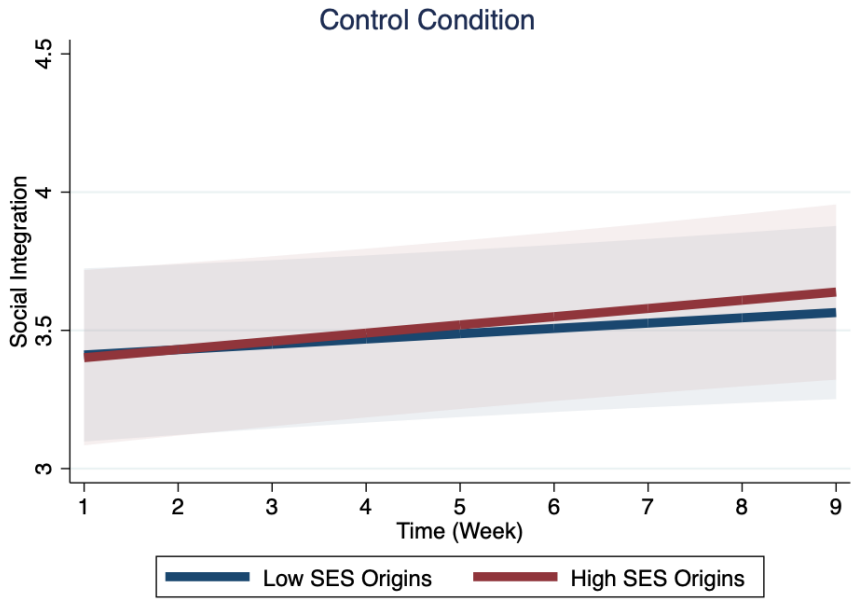
Note. N = 107. Financial support was rated on this scale: 0 = *No support*, 1 = *Scholarship*, 2 = *Bursary*. *$p \leq .05$

Figure 1



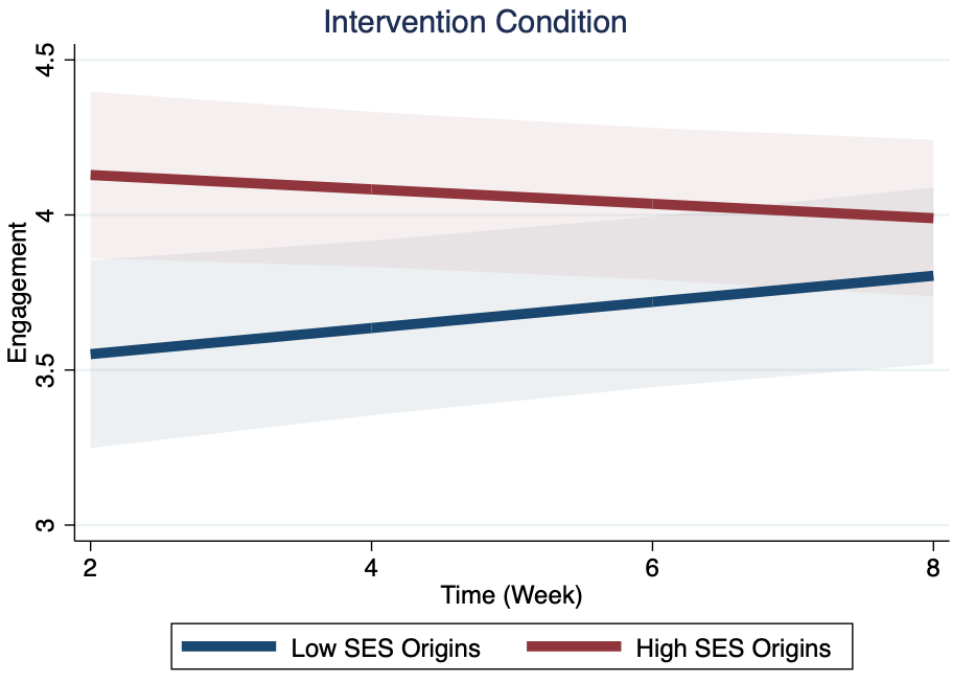
Note. Relationship between SES origins and social integration moderated by time in intervention condition with continuous confidence intervals plotted.

Figure 2



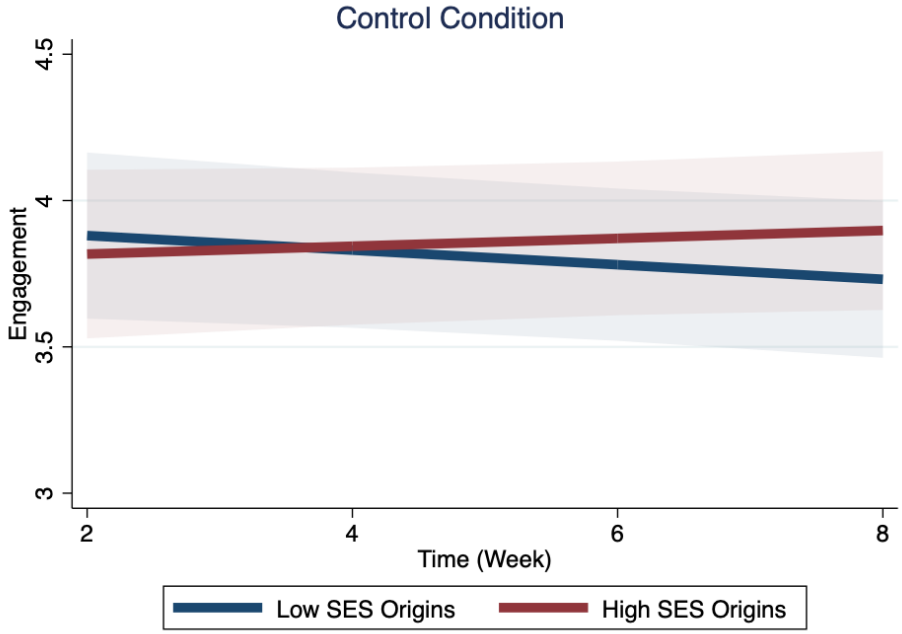
Note. Relationship between SES origins and social integration moderated by time in control condition with continuous confidence intervals plotted.

Figure 3



Note. Relationship between SES origins and engagement moderated by time in intervention condition with continuous confidence intervals plotted.

Figure 4



Note. Relationship between SES origins and engagement moderated by time in control condition with continuous confidence intervals plotted.